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Cool places
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Discover the
value of vinyl
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Man or woman?



Once upon a time, men were macho and women were docile and the division between the sexes could not have been clearer.

But in an era of entertainment, Hong Kong director Edward Lam says men are regressing into boys and women are becoming the men of tomorrow.

Lam's new play *Man and Woman, War and Peace* turns the cliché battle of the sexes on its head to examine the reality of today.

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**CHINESE
RESTAURANT**

China-Japan relations examined in new survey

By Zhang Dongya

A survey on China, Japan and the bilateral relationship between the two countries was released this month. Two major media groups – the *Oriental Outlook Weekly* in China and *Yomiuri Shimbun* in Japan – conducted and updated it for the third time since 2007.

The survey was carried out simultaneously in China and Japan asking nationals aged 20 and up the same questions.

Questionnaires went out to 1,796 people in Japan in November. Respondents were chosen from all regions of the country.

In China, samples were sent to 10 major cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan and Chengdu. The Chinese pollsters used direct-dialing this year, and their

Japanese counterparts selected the 250 questions.

New questions included some about the 2010 Expo in Shanghai and the newly inaugurated Prime Minister of Japan Yukio Hatoyama and his influence on the Sino-Japan relationship. Questions focused on knowledge and understanding about the present situations in each country and their global issues of interest.

According to the results, the top government leaders' frequent visits had a positive effect. Half the Chinese interviewees has a positive view of bilateral relations while more Japanese residents held a negative view.

But both sides agreed on the economy and were overwhelmingly optimistic about the future. Japanese respondents valued eco-

nomics and environmental issues and political diplomacy. Chinese respondents were most concerned with science and technology, the economy, education and culture.

Japan overwhelmingly saw China as its most important economic partner: 46 percent chose China, while 28 percent chose the US.

In October, Hatoyama visited Beijing less than a month after his inauguration. It was regarded as a positive gesture, and both sides said the visit had a positive impact.

Japan also recognized China's importance in the international community. More than 70 percent of Japanese respondents said they looked to China to lead a solution to the nuclear problems on the Korean peninsula.

But history remains an issue

of contention. About 44 percent of Chinese respondents said they are suspicious of Japan's "road to peace" since World War II. Both sides agreed that knowledge and understanding of history is the first step to promoting friendship and trust between China and Japan.

The survey also brought ill tidings for the Shanghai Expo: only 18 percent of Japanese respondents said they had an interest in it, but half of them praised the country's hosting of last year's Olympic Games.

Despite the differences, the countries share a cultural attraction. Japanese people love Chinese food and ancient history, as well as traditional medicine. Chinese people still love Japanese cars, appliance and cartoons.

City to have 4 mln cars on road this weekend

More than 4 million vehicles are expected to hit the roads this weekend in Beijing as the number of new cars sold remains at about 2,000 daily, the municipal traffic management bureau announced Tuesday.

The number of cars hit 3.99 million as of Sunday, according to the bureau. No one doubts the 4 million mark will be broken this weekend, which means a quarter of the 16 million permanent residents in the city has a car.

The number of vehicles in Beijing increased by 10,000 last week and the number of new drivers increased 12,000 within a week, the bureau said.

"Compared with other metropolises in the world, the growth of vehicles in Beijing is dramatic," said Guo Jifu, a researcher with the Beijing Municipal Communication Research Center.

It took the city 48 years to grow from 2,300 cars in 1949 to 1 million in 1997. The second million took six years and a half. The third only three years and nine months. The fourth million has been an astonishing two years and seven months, Guo said.

Tokyo took 12 years to go from 3 million to 4 million cars, he said.

The use of cars in Beijing is also more frequent than other big cities in the world. The daily commute of a car is 45 kilometers in Beijing, compared to 19 in Tokyo and 30 in London, Guo said.

"Cars in cities overseas are mostly used in the outskirts, but they mainly run in the urban area in Beijing. That's why they have better traffic conditions than Beijing even though they have many more cars," he said.

The rising car count has almost offset the positive effect of the traffic control measures the government implemented after the Olympics. The restriction based on the last digit of a car's license plate took 20 percent of the cars off the road from October 11, 2008.

"The traffic jams were eased in the first several months after the car restriction measures," a taxi driver surnamed Hu said. "However, that sense of ease has been fading since the first half of this year."

"More than 90 percent of Beijing's roads are overloaded. Road construction has been much slower than the growth of vehicles," said Zhang Jingchun, director of the bureau's information office.

How to find a parking space in the downtown and residential areas has also become a headache for new car owners.

To ease traffic, the city is expanding its subway system to 273 kilometers by 2010 and to 561 kilometers by 2020. By then, nearly 40 percent of residents are expected to travel by bus and subway.

(Xinhua)

'Excellent' migrant workers get hukou



Migrant workers build Beijing, but they are hoping for more than a hukou: they are hoping for respect.

CFP Photo

By Zhang Dongya

Fifty-three migrant workers were named "excellent migrant workers of Beijing". According to a new policy, those named at last week's ceremony could be eligible for local hukou: registered permanent residence in the city.

Thirty of the workers were from other provinces, and 23 had rural Beijing hukou. Holders of rural hukou would be eligible to move to urban hukou.

The migrant workers were builders, miners and cooks. They were awarded certificates with red cloth flowers on the front.

Those who have worked in the city for more than three years and who have performed well were eli-

gible for a certificate.

The Bureau of Labor and Social Security said awarded workers could apply for Beijing hukou if they met one of three conditions: they must be a senior mechanic, technician or have been selected as a model worker.

Last year, 36 workers were selected and 16 outsiders were granted Beijing hukou.

Data shows that 4 million migrant workers are in Beijing at present: 60 percent of the city's manufacturers, 80 percent of the builders are as are half the people working in dining and housekeeping.

Current statistics from the Bureau of Labor and Social

Security show the bureau and related departments have spent more than 100 million yuan in training 47,000 new workers from rural areas to help them find opportunities in the city, *China Weekly* reported.

Commentators and critics spoke highly of the policies for migrant workers, though they called for more meaningful rewards than Beijing hukou.

But hukou offers migrants more than a city identity. It is tied to the city's welfare and preferential policies for medical treatment and education, said Fang Xiaojing, a commentator with Hangzhou-based *Qianjiang Evening News*.

"Even with Beijing hukou, it is hard to see changes in the workers: they still live in terrible conditions and are treated like second-class citizens. Their hukou will just end up as a nice bottom for their bag of clothes," Fang said.

The country's regions are separated by vast cultural divisions, and discrimination against migrant workers is something that can hardly be scrubbed away with a hukou card.

"To integrate migrant workers happily into the city will take treating them like real people and showing them respect. Giving them a hukou is meaningless without those things," Fang said.

Petition says Chongqing police violated gang attorney's rights

By Han Manman

The rights of detained Beijing lawyer Li Zhuang, attorney for a suspected gang leader, were violated by Chongqing authorities, according to a petition signed by 20 lawyers from 11 provinces and municipalities Wednesday.

The letter said Chongqing authorities violated laws by detaining the lawyer while many facts of the case were unclear, and demanded authorities recognize Li's rights.

Because Chongqing authorities have a direct interest in the case, national authorities should have granted jurisdiction to an outside police bureau, it says.

The letter was sent to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Ministry of Public Security one day after a five-person team from the Beijing Lawyers Association (BLA) arrived in Chongqing Tuesday to investigate.

The 48-year-old lawyer Li was detained by Chongqing police last Sunday on suspicion of submitting false evidence and obstructing justice. He was turned in by his client Gong Gangmo, a kingpin apprehended in a surprise sting on organized crimes that began in June. Gong has been charged with murder, drug dealing and gunrunning.

The scandal began a week after Chongqing No.1 Intermediate Court delayed Gong's court trial, which was scheduled to be held on December 7. A new trial date has not been set.

"Li's detention has far-reaching negative consequences for the legal profession and leaves the public with a flimsy impression," Beijing lawyer Li Fangping, the main author of the petition, said.

Jiang Junlu, vice president of BLA, said if found guilty, Li will lose his license and membership. But if Li was only doing his job as a defense lawyer, the association will defend him.

Li allegedly pushed Gong to withdraw his confession, disturb the court and give false testimony. Li also instructed Gong to say he had



Lawyers who choose to defend suspects face considerable pressure. CFP Photo

been tortured for eight days during an interrogation, *China Youth Daily* quoted Chongqing public security bureau as saying Wednesday.

But Li said he was innocent. "I did everything in accordance with the law. We can't sacrifice procedural justice to bust up organized crime," he told *China Youth Daily*.

Li is one of many Beijing or Shanghai-based high-profile lawyers who has flown to Chongqing to defend alleged gang bosses.

The lawyers, many of whom were already in the hot seat, have been sharply criticized since Li's case broke.

Many of them have been condemned by netizens as "evil advisers" and some bloggers hailed Li's arrest as an "uplifting moment" and said he deserved it.

"The public's rage toward organized crime is understandable, but

defense lawyers are not representing gangs. Defense is there to ensure justice. The denunciation of lawyers reflects a failure of legal education in China," 75-year-old Zhao Changqing said.

Zhao has been condemned by netizens as "an evil adviser of organized crime" after entering a not-guilty plea for his client Li Qiang, who in October faced nine charges of organizing and leading mafia groups, disturbing social order and criminal operation.

Qiu Geping, a professor of criminology at the Shanghai-based East China University of Political Science and Law, said lawyers who choose to defend suspects face con-

siderable pressure caused by the local government's stance.

The Chongqing Judiciary Bureau issued a notice on September 8 urging lawyers involved in criminal gang cases to "have political awareness, take the overall situation into consideration and obey the rules," the *Southern Weekend* reported.

The campaign to crush underworld gangs is important, Qiu said, but it is not something that should be politicized.



Li Zhuang (left) is being interrogated. Photo provided by Southern Weekend

Wangjing home casino shut down

By Zhao Hongyi

Chaoyang police detained three expats for gambling earlier this month, according to the Municipal Immigration Office.

On December 13, police searched an office on the third floor of a business center in Wangjing residential community, northeast of Beijing. They found and confiscated twelve gambling machines and 5,000 yuan cash. The five operators and nine gamblers, five of whom were expats, were arrested at the scene.

A week earlier, residents near the business center told police many people were going there to gamble at night, and said the center ran a cover operation during daytime.

The operator allegedly confessed that they registered a legal gaming center months ago but could hardly lure business, so they installed the 12 gambling machines and found people interested in trying to beat the house.

During the interrogation, police learned five out of the gamblers were foreigners. The two who recently arrived in the country were informed of the national prohibition on gambling at the site. The other three expats were Sin (abbreviation), 20, a male student; Kim, 40, a corporate employee; and Lim, 35, another corporate employee.

Sin said he heard about the gambling center from classmates and came to kill time. He said he lost hundreds of yuan within an hour and said he would not come back.

The nine were jailed for five days.

Lin Song, press officer from the Municipal Immigration Office, said gaming is allowed and legal, but not when there is cash on the table.

"Police are usually flexible in dealing with gamblers," Lin said. "We usually release new gamblers as long as they promise to stop, but repeat offenders are punished."

Rural kids can succeed with big tobacco, school sponsor says

By Venus Lee

When last year's earthquake shook apart Sichuan schools, the tobacco companies were there to fund new buildings for primary education.

But China Tobacco Company may have entered like a wolf in sheep's clothing. One school built with its tobacco money is now branded the "Sichuan Tobacco Project Hope Primary School" and its walls adorned with pro-nicotine messages like "Work hard for society! Tobacco can help you become an achiever!"

Experts worry the constant exposure to pro-tobacco propaganda may influence the children to become future smoking addicts. Some question the legality of such sponsorship.

"This flies in the face of rules that cigarettes cannot be marketed to children. By putting 'tobacco' in

the name of the school, cigarette manufacturers are actively promoting youth smoking," Xu Jiahua, vice director of China Tobacco Control Association, said.

Tobacco is a leading cause of cancer and effects of constant exposure to advertisements will mislead students into thinking that smoking is no big deal, he said.

Meng Lingao, who works for China Tobacco, said tobacco companies are just fulfilling their social obligations. "Tobacco firms should not be barred from contributing to social welfare simply because the cigarettes they produce are harmful to their user's health," he said.

"It is OK as long as the firms never explicitly promote student smoking with their influence. But using a slogan like 'Tobacco can help you become an achiever!' is probably inappropriate for pri-

mary school," Zhao Jing, a pupil's mother, said.

Project Hope created 69 other schools sponsored by tobacco companies in Liaoning, Qinghai, Guizhou, Anhui, Guangxi, Sichuan, Hubei and Yunnan provinces, the *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.

Gu Zhenzhen, spokesman for the China Youth Development Foundation, said the foundation wants to control the number of sponsorships from tobacco and alcohol companies, but some of the poorest rural areas have no alternative sponsors.

He called for more investment in education and stronger social supervision at the local level.

He said there should be stipulations to ban promotion of tobacco when tobacco firms offer sponsorship. The rule that all cigarette packs must carry a warning that

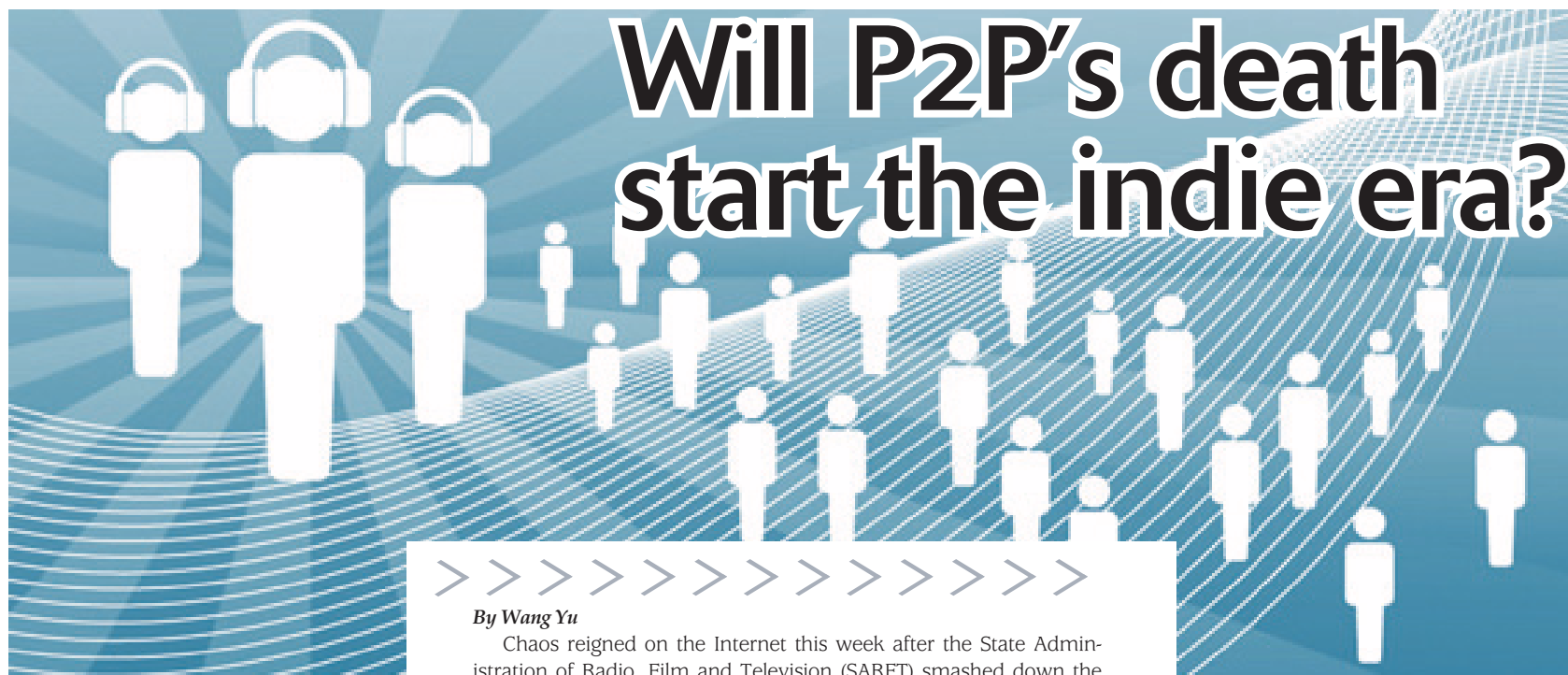


The sponsors may be using their position to promote tobacco use. This slogan on the school's wall says "Tobacco can help you become an achiever" Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

"smoking is harmful to health" may also apply in this matter.

As a signatory to the Framework Convention on Tobacco

Control, a WTO agreement, the country is supposed to ban tobacco ads, promotion and sponsorship before 2011.



Making a deal

Howard Wang plays in a rock band. Aside from his roles as lead singer and songwriter, he also acts as the producer and copyright holder of the group's two EPs. Like all underground musicians, Wang promotes his music by uploading MP3 files on MySpace and douban.com.

His band has a few fans and has performed at some local clubs. But for Wang, the most important thing is to help people find the group's music. All its tracks were made available for free online download before the group signed with a few digital music sites that wanted its music as ringtones and full-length singles.

"So far we have signed with four sites, all nonexclusive contracts. We have never received any royalties, yet our songs are being peddled by even more ringtone sellers without our permission," he said.

But that is not unexpected.

In the digital world, many bands shrug and take it as extra publicity, he said.

The local indie music scene is made up of full-time office workers who do music on the side. They spend money to spread their music instead of playing to profit. It is an alien concept for the mainstream, where free sharing cuts into the advertising and promotion budgets of pop machines.

Artists' bigger enemies

Indie artists are not the only ones seeing the value of free music. In September, the successful British indie label Beggars Records opened its China office. The label is working with Outdustry, a Beijing music company founded by the British promoter Ed Peto, as its exclusive representative in Beijing. The full Beggars catalogue will be available on wa3.cn for online subscription.

The record company, which handles stars like Radiohead, Belle & Sebastian, Basement Jaxx, Beck, Cat Power, Jarvis Cocker, Mogwai, Scott Walker, Sigur Rós, Sonic Youth and The Strokes, is reaching out to local listeners.

"Buying music online is convenient, and without the physical record distribution costs, it is cheap. It is true that in China, things are extreme because the country does not have a history of pop music culture. But Chinese people are not the only ones who are not willing to buy digital music: people download music for free all over the world," said Simon Wheeler, director of digital music of the company.

That free downloading is in part why Beggars is here. Online distribution helped introduce foreign music to local audience long before the record company began to embrace digital technology.

Local fans of Western music grew up with the sound on "dakou" tapes a decade ago.

By Wang Yu

Chaos reigned on the Internet this week after the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) smashed down the most popular file-sharing site BT@China.

The new anti-file-sharing stance of the government has found few fans among the scared netizen populace. Many users are seeking out and downloading more than ever to prepare for what they expect will be a media-free future following this era of free media.

Rumors are circulating that Internet service providers will move to lock down peer-to-peer file-sharing streams before the year is out.

For music lovers, all is not lost. Many have already made the first transition from cheap and plentiful pirate CDs to the Web. The small file sizes of MP3s make them easily distributable by 0-day warez groups dedicated to expedient piracy.

But the government's willingness to fight online piracy is good news for people working on legal online music distribution services and for the artists. Foreign money is being re-injected into the industry, and many sites are looking to the indie scene for a start.

"All Spotify does is make MP3 hunting obsolete. You can find music through its software easier than on your hard drive," Shi said.

But local consumer habits do not line up with Spotify's model. The government has not approved Wi-Fi for inclusion in mobile phones and the third-generation mobile networks are only just now going up: few portable devices stay online outside the home. According to data from iResearch, the market for digital music will hit 1.8 billion yuan this year, a rise of 8.2 percent over last year.

But almost all that money is in "wireless music": ringtones purchased by mobile phone users.

Few musicians would consider a 30-second ringtone to be "music." Indie artists rarely win mainstream recognition even if they sign a few ringtone contracts like Wang did. The remaining 7.9 percent of the "online music" market is sites like Xiami and Songtaste: plagiarized hackups of Last.fm, which change little more than the copyright message. They allow users to upload MP3 files and to sell music.

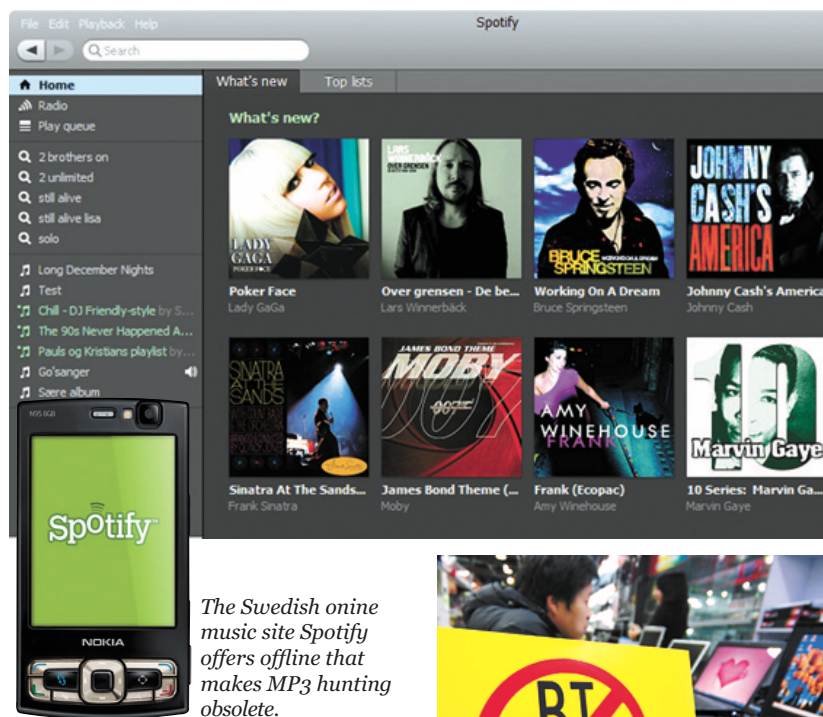
But niche sites focus on long-term plans. Wa3.cn was spawned by a former e-magazine of the same name. The magazine was essential reading for indie music during the e-zine boom of 2005. The site's users promotes indie music rather than mainstream acts. Wa3.cn offers a 90-second preview of each song and members can buy high quality MP3 files for 1 yuan each through Alipay. Users can pay a flat 20 yuan monthly fee for 88 downloads per month.

Foreign observers remain ambivalent: China remains a largely unexplored market, but it remains so because many are put off by its history of piracy. It is still very tough to convince listeners to pay for music. It takes time to change consumption habits, but it will not happen without a scene. Without listeners, there will be no scene.

Mathew Daniel is the vice president of R2G, owner of one of China's biggest digital music distribution platforms. R2G is the mother company of the legal indie music store Wa3.cn, which has the largest collection of independent music by both local and foreign artists.

"Too much choice (even if it is free) without guidance does not help users as much as it seems. Users are trying to learn more about indie artists, as only with information and recommendations can they figure out what they like. We are working with multiple partners to introduce, promote and teach the listeners about great indie music and artists so they will be more willing to pay for this service," Daniel said.

Many artists are still waiting for listeners to take the first steps away from quantity and toward quality.



Zhongguancun stores are letting customers know about the death of P2P.

CFP Photo

The tapes were cut, punched and marked defective by music moguls seeking to dump excess stock on free foreign ports to avoid taxation back home. It did not take long for those tape to migrate from garbage barges to the black market.

Pirated music has shaped a generation of music lovers.

With the profit margins of physical distribution falling rapidly, digital distribution is becoming the preferred solution.

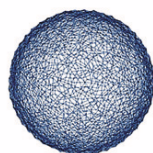
Truth be told, recording artists in China – especially native ones – face something even more terrifying than piracy: obscurity.

A complex scene

Shi Lei, an industry employee, recently

forked over 300 yuan for three months of Spotify, a new and popular Swedish online music service. The website does not offer its service in China so Shi had to register through a UK proxy and ask a friend to cover the bill in pounds sterling.

Unlike the formerly successful Last.fm, connection to Spotify holds steady in China. Users who have paid can also listen to music offline by installing a database.



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Chaos in Copenhagen

As climate conference nears end, much is left up in the air

With less than 12 hours to go before world leaders were due to endorse a sweeping climate-change deal, it was hard to tell whether there was more bedlam and tension outside the negotiating hall or inside.

Outside Copenhagen's suburban Bella Center, about 4,000 activists attempting to hold a "people's assembly" within the summit grounds were stopped by police. Clashes broke out in which 260 protesters were detained, Danish police said.

Inside the center, the mood was equally cheerless. Delegates and observers from 193 countries complained about near-futile negotiations that went almost round the clock as today's deadline drew near – when Canadian premier Stephen Harper, US President Barack Obama and other world leaders are expected to formally agree to make significant cuts to greenhouse-gas emissions to take the edge off global warming.

"At this stage in the negotiations, it's unusual for so much to be left uncertain, and for so much to be left to be determined by the heads of government and state," Elisabeth DeMarco, an emissions-trading lawyer at Toronto's Macleod Dixon, who has attended many climate summits, said Monday. The summit began December 7.

Internal documents published on the website of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change show entire paragraphs, even pages, of text "bracketed" – the term used by negotiators to determine areas where no consensus exists. They include the maximum temperature-increase goal (1 C, 1.5 C and 2 C were the options), the rich countries' emissions-reduction target by 2050 (the range was 75 to 95 percent) and, crucially, almost all areas of funding to fight climate change.

(Agencies)

The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen ends today. The highly anticipated summit, the hope for a new blueprint toward a greener world when the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012, ends up chaotic: violent demonstrations and inefficient organization were matched by such sloppy chairmanship that delegation walkouts became an almost daily occurrence.

As world leaders arrive in force today for closing discussions, the talks stand perilously poised.



Police clash with activists of the "Don't Buy The Lie" group during a demonstration.

IC Photo

Analyst

A positive vision from the chaos of Copenhagen

The original, over-ambitious hopes for a legally binding treaty have long since been abandoned, and the summiteers are now looking to secure a "political agreement" that can be fleshed out in the months ahead. Some sort of text will be agreed on – there can be no doubt about that.

US President Barack Obama, Premier Wen Jiabao and other global leaders are not going to stay overnight in Denmark for a non-event. But assessing what form that agreement might take is proving immensely difficult – both because of the complexity of the issues being negotiated and the fact that the heavy lifting is taking place behind closed doors.

What can be said without contradiction, however, is that two distinctive visions have emerged in Copenhagen: one rather bleak, the other less so.

The first is personified by former US Vice Presi-

dent Al Gore, the Jeremiah of man-made climate change. Never one to undercook his message, he warned the summit that "the future of human civilization is now threatened." Gore sees deep cuts in carbon emissions as vital, on the grounds that without them, mankind is doomed.

The alternate vision has been best articulated by, of all people, Arnold Schwarzenegger. The governor of California is a green evangelist, but a positive one. He is right. The world should be investing far more heavily in green technology; just \$10 billion (68 billion yuan) a year is spent on it globally, a pathetically small amount.

At the same time, there should be major investment in adaptation measures to prepare countries most at risk from the impact of climate change.

(The Telegraph)

Chinese voice

Failure of Copenhagen conference not an option

China has great expectations for the Copenhagen climate change conference, which must be a success in order to launch measures to avoid calamitous global warming, said Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei last Sunday.

"Climate change is a challenge the whole global community faces. Failure of the Copenhagen climate conference is not an option," He told Xinhua News Agency.

The official promised that "as a big country, China will do its share, so we've taken a constructive and positive approach in the Copenhagen talks and elsewhere."

Last month, China announced it would reduce the intensity of carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent of 2005 levels.

Premier Wen Jiabao, who arrived in Copenhagen Wednesday evening, told reporters his attendance aims to show the great importance the Chinese government and people attach to fighting climate change and to assert their sincerity and determination to work with the international community.

(Agencies)

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Jingle bells for recovery

Upcoming Christmas season to urge more domestic consumption

By Huang Daohen

The export sector is looking good this Christmas, as year-on-year decline slowed to 15.2 percent in the third quarter from a historic high of 23.1 percent early this year.

But Santa Claus brought more this year than good news for economists. Statistics show that domestic consumption will see a boom amidst the bustling run up to the festival. Many young people already see Christmas as part of Chinese life

Back with a whimper

In the past, every day was Christmas at Yiwu, the world's largest wholesale market. But things were different last summer when the global financial crisis struck, Lin Ruxin, manager of a gift company in Yiwu, said.

"Instead of a cheery Christmas, we sat through a cold winter last year," Lin said. The European and US markets went into deep recession last October and November, and recovery came too late for the holidays, Lin said.

Usually, foreign buyers order at least three or four months in advance, he said.

In Western countries, Christmas gifts begin landing on shelves in early October.

Lin's company, which exports Christmas commodities to the US, suffered last year. The company's orders fell 30 to 40 percent and it had to drop a third of its employees.

But with Christmas orders coming in steadily since September, the company now faces a worker shortage. However, unlike in previous years, Lin said he is not worried about the shortage. "The whole supply chain is changing and export volumes can hardly return to the original levels," he said.

Lin's company is typical of the export sector. According to the Ministry of Commerce, export decline slowed during the second half of the year. Imports and exports are improving, and there should only be a year-on-year drop to 20 percent this month.

Wen Yijun, an industrial analyst with Oriental Securities, said export cities will enjoy a happy holiday.

But things become murky once more after Christmas. Exports are largely dependent on two factors: a lower base as the country moves on from the financial crisis and the first Christmas shopping season since markets collapsed.

"There has been a recovery but we are nowhere near returning to 2007 or 2008 numbers," he said.

Continued and long-term exports still depend on consumption in the US market, but it is unclear whether American consumers can find the money to keep buying, he said.

Western consumption alone cannot sustain market

growth, Wen said. "We have to rely more on the domestic market than we used to. It's also time to explore emerging markets in Russia, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia and South America, which may make up for lost orders."

Domestic consumption urged

Christmas in China, undiluted by religious sentiment or spiritual meaning, is a purely commercial beast.

While the holiday is still a week away, both supermarkets and shopping malls are already holding special Christmas sales. Other businesses are also decorating for the season.

A 20-meter-high Christmas tree was put in front of the Beijing Pacific Department Store's Yingke branch, one of the most famous shopping centers in Sanlitun. At the entrance,

clerks in Santa Claus hats greet customers.

"Young people identify with Christmas culture. You know, Christmas, New Year's Day and Spring Festival are the three peak seasons for sales," Yan Chengda, vice manager of the store, said.

"And young people are the force that drives Christmas sales. They usually buy clothes or jewelry as Christmas gifts," he said.

Yan said his department store launched a series of plans to boost Christmas sales and expected to pull in 500 million yuan sales this season.

With Christmas a week away, young people are ticking off items on Christmas lists. Li Donghai, 27, an IT worker, has just bought a Christmas gift for his girlfriend.

"We've been exchanging Christmas gifts since we first knew each other. Now, it's a tradition for us. Receiving a gift on Christmas day is romantic," he said.

While shopping malls are bustling with promotions, bar owners are bracing for a rowdy night of fun-seeking party animals on Christmas Eve.

Wang Yong runs a bar named Club Zoom by Houhai. Originally, he only arranged one party for Christmas Eve. Tickets sold out immediately and he had to prepare for an extra one the following day.

"The Christmas party is part of our annual plan. The theme



A Christmas tree, installed for the upcoming celebrations, stands in front of a downtown shopping mall. CFP Photos



Companies are hoping for big domestic sales during Christmas.

of our party this year is Nordic music. Our tickets sold out very quickly. People really like the idea, especially the foreigners," he said.

According to government data, domestic consumption booms in the Christmas season. But a greater boom can be expected as the first anniversary of the global financial crisis passes by.

Christmas in China

"When I look around the city, I'm struck by the number of Christmas trees, lights and animatronic Santas. Every store seems to have Christmas specials, and the soundtrack matches that of any mall in New York. I wondered: where am I?" An American businessman wrote in his blog after his first visit to Beijing.

Christmas is becoming part of life for Chinese people now, and more and more people are embracing it each year, local resident Li Donghai said.

There are many traditional festivals in China, but except for Spring Festival, none share the Western holiday's festive atmosphere, he said.

However, he said he felt worried about losing his own culture as kids look forward to presents rather than folding jiaozi. "In fact, although more and more people pay attention to Christmas, few know anything at all about the history and culture behind this most important Western festival," he said.

"Sometimes, we just want a reason for revelry," he said.

An online survey carried out by Sina.com asked why Christmas is popular in China. About 87 percent of the respondents said it was because the merchants do so well this season.

"Merchants think of the festival as a good opportunity to promote their sales, so they are trying their best to import and mark down Christmas."

Others said that accepting foreign festivals is a natural consequence of globalization.

Will panda go extinct?

Genome map kicks off debate over panda conservation

By Venus Lee

The giant panda, an endangered Chinese national treasure, remains laboriously protected from extinction by millions of state yuan spent on its habitat and elaborate breeding programs. Last Sunday, a study that mapped the panda's genome concluded that from the biological standpoint, the animal cannot go extinct. The findings triggered a debate over the future of the country's expensive panda conservation programs.

The genome map, a chromosome reconstruction that shows the relative position of an organism's genes, shows that pandas prefer a bamboo diet because they cannot taste the flavor of meat. This information could hold the key to ensuring the species' survival.

The study, led by the Beijing Genomics Institute's branch in Shenzhen, found that pandas likely roamed the Earth as far back as 3 million years ago, and that their genetic makeup evolves slower than that of humans and other mammals.

The panda's genome sequence

shows no genes producing the enzyme needed to break down cellulose. "The panda's bamboo diet may be dictated by the bacteria in its stomach rather than by its genetic composition," said Wang Jun, a scientist with the institute who led the sequencing project.

Mutations in certain sequences of the animal's taste gene, which can affect its ability to taste savory flavors such as meat and other high-protein foods, may have turned them toward a strict bamboo diet, the study says.

Further findings from 3-year-old female panda Jinjing, which

provided the DNA samples, suggest that the decline in the giant panda population is not due to inbreeding but to variations in its DNA. From this the researchers deduced that pandas will not go extinct.

The genome map details 21,000 genes packed into 21 pairs of chromosomes. Among animals whose genes have been sequenced, the closest to the panda is the dog, with an 80 percent likeness. The map also shows that pandas are a subspecies of the bear family ursidae, confirming results from studies conducted last year and earlier this year.

"This is very exciting for the

giant panda research community because much of it is new to us," said Zhang Liming, a researcher at the Wolong Panda Nature Reserve in Sichuan Province. "Further research involving genome mapping will help us develop better technology for giant panda breeding and disease prevention."

Only 1,600 pandas live in the wild, mostly in Sichuan Province. A hundred and twenty are in Chinese breeding facilities and zoos, and about 20 live in zoos outside the country, according to the China Giant Panda Protection and Research Center.

Experts

Protecting pandas still a necessity

There are still very serious threats against pandas in the wild. First, the destruction of their habitat: from 1973 to 1984, the animal's living space in six areas shrunk by 50 percent. Although a 1998 logging ban helped to slow habitat destruction, poaching and illegal logging are still a problem.

Second, the interruption of their migration routes. Bamboo, the panda's main food, flowers once every 10 to 100 years, depending on the species. When the bamboo in one area flowers, pandas move on. It used to be easy for the animals to do this; not anymore. Human population has expanded, roads and settlements have been built and forests have been cleared for agriculture, charcoal production and logging. These changes have made

panda migration difficult, often leaving them restricted to "islands of forest."

Third, consumption of wild meat threatens wild panda. Although they are occasionally hunted for their fur, most pandas that are injured or killed were inadvertently caught in traps meant for deer, takin, bear and other such animals. Panda meat is sold in some markets and restaurants near reserves.

Pandas are also threatened by a low reproduction rate. Females in the wild normally have a cub once every two or three years. The fertility rate of captive giant pandas is even lower.

— Pan Wenshi, expert on panda conservation at Peking University

Genome map does not reflect situation of species

The deduction that pandas won't go extinct is based on the study of only one panda. All the DNA samples used in the study were extracted from Jinjing, who was chosen after serving as a mascot at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The deduction only reveals genetic polymorphism among giant pandas.

The significance of the report lies in that it eliminates our worries that inbreeding would damage the species and lead to a decline in its population. Since the very beginning of the captive-giant-panda-breeding program, experts have put genetic security as the most important indicator of the species' longevity, because inbreeding may cause stillbirths and decline in the animal's health.

— Shen Fujun, director of Chendou Giant Panda Breeding Base

Comment

Merely protecting a symbol; let nature take its course

Pandas have become a symbol and in a sense, their protection is about the deep emotion that is attached to that symbol. We have spent a lot of money and resources to protect this symbol. Can't we think about whether the money and resources are worth it? Can we really afford these big lovable animals that will suck up so much of our funds in the long run? What we should protect is nature, not a symbol. So I think we should respect the laws of nature: natural selection through biological evolution.

— Yang Jun, university student

Protecting the ecosystem matters

Conservation, both nationally and globally, involves limited resources, and I think we're going to have to make some hard and pragmatic choices. The truth is that pandas are extraordinarily expensive to maintain.

We spend a lot on this animal and a few others when we know the best thing we can do is to look after the world's biodiversity hotspots with greater care. We simply can't protect only pandas; we have to protect the ecosystem they depend upon.

— Jeff Hunter, freelancer

A consequence of human irresponsibility

I do not think the job of protecting giant pandas is meaningless. Being able to allow a species to live on to enjoy the planet together with human is a meaningful thing. The reason pandas need our help is that people are driving them to extinction. We are taking over their habitats, so we are also the ones who need to save them.

— Zhang Boju, director of Friends of Nature China

Resources should be better managed

The "flagship species" argument (species chosen to represent an environmental cause) is probably the only reason I'm not in favor of just pulling the plug on pandas. Of course, most of the funding in panda conservation seems to go toward captive breeding rather than habitat conservation, so even that might not really be a convincing argument. It doesn't seem bad to put a panda on the cover of a brochure like WWF's and use the money that pours in for less cute, more vital and urgent projects.

I don't want to see the panda vanish, but I think resources could be far better used in other conservation projects worldwide.

— Brad Dukes, a journalist



Should pandas be left to face extinction?
CFP Photo



Heddy Honigmann discovers in a Paris cemetery that beauty outlives death. Photo provided by IDOCS

By He Jianwei

"Quiet, but beautiful" was the local impression of Heddy Honigmann's documentary *Forever*, which opened the 2009 Beijing International Documentary Forum (IDOCS) at the Beijing Film Academy last Saturday.

The film is about a place where love and death are entwined and

beauty lives on: the Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

Honigmann shows the mysterious yet calming beauty of the graveyard through the eyes of its visitors. Many come to visit a family member; others honor their idols by leaving behind a message or a flower. Among the celebrities buried at Pere Lachaise are US

singer Jim Morrison and British novelist Oscar Wilde.

The cemetery gradually reveals itself not only as a final resting place, but also as a source of peace and inspiration for the living. "It's not so much a film about death, but about life and the importance of art," Honigmann says.

Honigmann, a child of Holo-

caust survivors, was born 1951 in Lima, Peru. She left the country in 1973 to travel Mexico, Israel, Spain and France. She settled in Amsterdam where she acquired Dutch citizenship in 1978.

Memory, music and love are recurring themes in her films. "Every now and again, an image, an encounter or a scene moves me to the extent that it is forever etched in my memory and later becomes the catalyst for making a film – like *Forever*," Honigmann says.

In October 1996, she saw a 70-year-old woman smoking and humming in an alcove in a village cemetery in Andalusia, Spain. When Honigmann approached her, the elderly woman said she did not normally smoke – only when she visited the cemetery with her husband.

The song the woman was humming was based on a poem by Federico Garcia Lorca dedicated to singer Dolores La Parrala. "When I sing, I do it for my husband, such wonderful lyrics, such powerful music," the elderly woman said.

The scene haunted the direc-

tor, "possibly because of the association with those themes that are eternal and continue to preoccupy us: the insoluble mysteries of love and death," Honigmann said.

Two years later, she visited Pere Lachaise to see the grave of George Melie, regarded as a "film magician" through his cinematography. She saw a passport photograph of a girl with the words "thank you" on Melie's grave. On Frederic Chopin's tomb, she saw a young woman leave a red and a white flower.

"There is little consolation where death is concerned," Honigmann said. "I simply had to make a film that celebrates love and offers a serene perspective on death. A film about how beauty can console, forever."

The film, which was shot and edited in 32 days, has won numerous awards since it debuted in the Netherlands in 2006. Its accolades include Best Feature Documentary at the 2006 Netherlands Film Awards and the Full Frame Documentary Festival's Inspiration Award in the US a year later.

Japanese lawmakers visit migrant student school

By Zhao Hongyi

A Japanese delegation including lawmakers from the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) visited BN Vocational School last Saturday and on the spot received from members 10,000 yuan for the migrant children's school.

Ishimori Hisatugu, 47, among the youngest of the 143 legislators present, passed around a colleague's hat and collected 4,851 yuan and 53,020 yen (4,000 yuan) for BN, a private, nonprofit school established four years ago. The school provides free two-year vocational education to children of poor migrant workers.

The group of 600 Japanese visitors came to learn more about the issues facing migrant workers and

the lives of their children. "We have many poor people demanding help and support in Japan as well. We'll bring back to Japan what we've learned," legislator Tuchida Kumiko said. "I'll start learning Chinese back home and come back to Beijing some day to teach the kids here Japanese."

Yao Li, the school principal, said they will "be very glad to receive teachers like you to open new courses in our school."

In the past decade, a number of private migrant schools have sprung up in Beijing to provide elementary, high school and vocational education to the city's growing migrant population. BN is the only school classified as a charity.

With China's industrialization and modernization, its rural population has decreased from 700 million in 1978 to 200 million today. Rural residents comprised 87 percent of the total population in 1978; that figure is now down to 15 percent. Hundreds of millions have streamed into cities for work: they have played a critical role in the country's economic success story in the 21st century.

Many migrant workers bring their families. But most receive lower pay and fewer benefits than urban residents, so they cannot afford their children's education.

"One of our objectives is to educate students to meet the needs of our cities for a skilled workforce," she said.



Japanese legislators donate 10,000 yuan to the BN Vocation School for migrant children. Photo by Jackie Jia

The Japanese delegation, led by DPJ secretary general Ozawa Ichirou, was in town for the 16th Great Wall Exchange Program, a project run by the Chinese National Alliance Federation and its Japanese counterpart since 1989 to promote trust and understanding between the two nations. Its participants include legisla-

tors, social activists and members of youth groups.

The delegation also visited the Yizhuang Economic and Technical Development Zone, Beijing Managing Center for Trolley Transportation, Beijing Gaobeidian Sewage Treatment Plant and several Beijing villages to discover the latest developments and challenges in China.

Obama's brother refuses to appear in film

By Han Manman

US President Barack Obama's half brother Mark Ndesandjo refused an offer to appear in the Chinese film *Let the Bullets Fly*, saying he wants to focus on his writing and charity work.

The 122-million-yuan frontier movie is directed by Jiang Wen and stars Hong Kong megastar Chow Yun-fat. Ndesandjo was offered to play a pastor in the film because "Mark has a good figure and is good looking. The point is, he can speak fluent Chinese and knows about Chinese culture," said a production staff who asked to be identified

as Penny.

When news of the film offer broke, it immediately became a hot topic in the domestic media. The public was clearly excited to see Ndesandjo's first appearance on the big screen.

But Ndesandjo, who shares a father with the US President, said he did not even consider accepting the offer. He said he was too busy with his writing and charity projects.

Ndesandjo has kept a low profile since reports surfaced last year that he was living and working in Shenzhen.

But he has received more

media attention since Obama's visit to China in November. He briefly met with the president during his state visit to Beijing.

Earlier that month, Ndesandjo made a rare public appearance in Guangzhou for the release of *From Nairobi to Shenzhen*, a novel that he said drew on his painful childhood under an abusive father.

Last Friday, the Shenzhen Youth League named him the city's "image ambassador" for his volunteer work teaching English and piano to local orphans.

Ndesandjo is the son of Obama's late father and his third wife Ruth Ndesandjo. Just after



Ndesandjo plays piano to local orphans.

Photo provided by Sina.com

September 11, 2001, Ndesandjo moved to China from the US. While working as a consultant, he

opened a chain of barbecue restaurants with a friend. Last year, he married a Chinese woman.

Survivors urge global landmine ban

By Han Manman

Ninety-eight percent of reported victims of cluster bombs are civilians, of which 32 percent are children, says a Handicap International (HI) report released in Beijing Wednesday.

The report says that despite progress in stockpile destruction and landmine clearance, and 10 years after the Mine Ban Treaty (BMT) was enforced, there is still much to do to treat landmine survivors, give them support and reintegrate them into society.

Survivors lack assistance

The report, "Voices from the Ground – Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War Survivors Speak out on Victim Assistance," is the first ever survey of landmine survivors' opinions on the assistance they receive. The study was completed in July and surveyed 1,645 survivors in 25 countries.

The report reveals that survivors are rarely included in the decision-making of activities destined to benefit them; more than two-thirds thinks their needs are not considered when their government makes plans to help them.

"It is not enough for countries to destroy stockpiles and clear the land; they must also help the people who survived the explosions and now live in the lands and include them in the decision-making process," Jean Van Wetter, director of HI China, said.

"People living in rural areas need affordable help near their homes,

and survivors everywhere clearly want the opportunity to get a job and rebuild their lives," Wetter said.

The report also says survivors have to battle discrimination and compete with other marginalized groups for social services. Despite improvements in medical care and physical rehabilitation programs, most survivors still have to rely on their families and friends for support, and by far their biggest need is employment and education.

Appeal for more countries to sign total ban treaty

The report urges more countries to sign the BMT, a treaty crafted in 1997 that imposes a total ban on antipersonnel landmines – prohibiting their use, stockpiling, production and transfer – to prevent more casualties.

"My daughter is dead because of a landmine. I really hope every country will sign the BMT to create a safer and healthier environment for kids to grow up," Kien Le, a Vietnamese farmer, said during an HI news conference in Beijing.

Le lost his left leg from a cluster bomb explosion while tending his field in 1991. Worse, the accident killed his four-year-old daughter who was playing nearby.

The loss of his leg plunged his family into debt since he was their breadwinner. "I also hope there will be assistance programs in household economic development and rehabilitation for cluster bomb survivors," Le said.



Aynalem Zenebe was injured in a cluster bomb explosion 11 years ago. One of her legs had to be amputated.
Photo provided by Handicap International

His wife Hutong Thi Nguyen has been a village health worker since 1998 in one of the areas worst affected by cluster bombs in Vietnam. She has seen many people injured or killed by the deadly leftover of the wars.

"Explosive remnants of war have brought me immense pain and unprecedented loss. I hope nobody will ever suffer like me," Thi Nguyen said at the news conference.

Wetter said 156 states have already accepted the BMT, but 37 – including China, the US, Russia and India – have not yet signed up.

China going step by step

"China has reasons" for not signing the BMT, said Zhai Dequan, deputy director of China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, a domestic NGO involved

in arms control, disarmament and nonproliferation.

The treaty requires BMT member states to implement the total ban on antipersonnel landmines within 10 years from signing, but China cannot do that right now, Zhai said.

Landmines are still used in its border regions to deter invaders, Zhai said, adding that China has a vast territory and there are not enough troops to guard its borders.

"Though China has not yet signed the treaty, the country is on course to achieve this target," Zhai said. "We just have to do it step by step." He said the country has already stopped producing landmines and stopped their export since 1996.

Meanwhile, the release of HI's report was accompanied by the opening of a photo exhibition, "Fatal Footprint," which portrays survivors of landmines and cluster munitions. The images show scars, missing arms and legs and landmines' damaging effects on families and communities.

Organized by HI and the French Embassy, the exhibition was put together by three famous Belgian photographers – Tim Dirven, Gael Turine and John Vinck – who traveled to Cambodia, Colombia, Ethiopia and Laos to meet landmine, cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance survivors.

The exhibition will run until January 15, 2010 at the French Culture Center. Admission is free.

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Veterinary center discusses responsibility



The seminar attracted 60 animal protection NGO members and volunteers.

Photos by Chris Gelken/Shirley Han Ying

By Chris Gelken and Shirley Han Ying

Pet ownership is a relatively recent trend in China, and while its popularity is increasing, the knowledge required to be a responsible pet owner is not keeping pace. When that cute and cuddly puppy or kitten becomes too much of a burden, it often ends up in an animal shelter run by volunteers – or meets a less optimistic fate.

The International Center for Veterinary Services (ICVS) organized a free seminar December 5 to share information on the best practices in animal rescue and shelter management. It also tackled shelter medicine and how to increase successful adoptions of abandoned pets.

ICVS co-founder Frank Fan discussed the mechanics of running an animal shelter. Apart from financing and funding, he also covered essentials such as the first steps to take when you bring a stray animal to a shelter.

"You'll need to separate the sick ones from the healthy ones," he said. "You also need to separate the docile ones from the ones with an aggressive nature."

He said the same principles of running a business apply to running a shelter: how many animals can you help with the resources available?

"Using management skills to run a shelter is very important. You need to set your goals. The question you have to think about is either the quality of care you can provide, or the quantity of animals you will potentially handle," Fan said.

Visiting US veterinarian Zenithson Ng offered valuable insights into infectious disease control and the difficult subject of euthanasia.

Ng said that a lot needs to be done to improve pet services in China, and it begins with the relationship between owner and pet.

"The human-animal bond really has to take place as part of the culture here in China. People really have to value their animals. They have to have them as part of their families, as part of their children, as part of their loved ones to really understand the human-animal bond, and put these animals on a pedestal and realize they are more than just animals. They are companions," he said.



Frank Fan (right) and Mary Peng (middle), co-founders of ICVS, take participant Xie Zheng, founder of Don't Eat Friends, to visit their animal shelter.

Mary Peng, another co-founder of ICVS, explained Trap, Neuter and Release as a viable, inexpensive and humane way of controlling the feral cat populations in Beijing and other Chinese cities.

Besides asking questions, seminar participants also had an opportunity to share some of their experiences in operating animal shelters.

"I think I see hope in our nation's dog or pet culture," Jin Yu, a shelter operator, said. "There are so many people taking it seriously and so many kind people who are concerned about this issue. This concern, together with the implementation of an animal protection law in China, will have a major impact to push things forward."

Xie Zheng, founder of the nonprofit group Don't Eat Friends, said he was delighted that "teams that promote animal protection can learn a lot of professional knowledge that we normally have no access to."

The organizers said they were pleased with the turnout and the participants' positive reaction. "We had groups contacting us from Jinan, from Harbin, from Tianjin, from Shenzhen, Xiamen, Guangzhou – all these

different provinces," Peng said. "We realized that we had really struck a chord with the community, with all of these groups, all these individuals that are trying to do their best."

Peng said part of ICVS' mission is to offer consultation to groups and individuals experiencing problems with rescue and shelter services. With pet ownership becoming more "fashionable," the problem of pet abandonment is growing; a significant number of animals in shelters were dumped by their foreign owners when their contract in China ended.

"We get lots of calls and lots of emails from families that say, 'Hey, we are moving to such and such country, and we cannot take our pets with us.' And this is one of the leading causes of abandonment among the international community as the owners simply cannot or will not take the animals with them when they relocate," she said.

Responsible pet ownership is a core message of ICVS – so if you are considering getting a puppy or a kitten, you should first pause to think. If you are unsure if you can handle the responsibility, then do not get a pet: it is that simple.

Event

SambAsia Beijing Brazilian drumming class

SambAsia Beijing is the only ensemble in China dedicated to promoting the drumming traditions of Brazil. The community-based organization recently moved its shows to live music venue 2 Kolegas and holds an introductory drumming class there every Sunday. The class is open to anyone with little or no experience in music. All instruments are provided and the first class is free.

Where: 2 Kolegas, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu, Sanyuanqiao, Chaoyang District

When: Every Sunday, 11 am – 1 pm

Tel: 8196 4820

Cost: 50 yuan per class, 180 yuan per month

Charity Christmas Party

Raffles Design Institute Beijing's fashion marketing and management students are helping out orphans not only by raising funds but also by increasing awareness of the poor conditions in orphanages.

The students are holding a charity Christmas party this Friday, themed "Friends Matters," which includes two mini fashion shows and live performances by Chocho Maldito and You Mei You. Proceeds will go to Coal for Kids, a project of Our Chinese Daughters Foundation (OCDF), a US-based nonprofit organization that supports families who have adopted children from China.

Where: Cangku bar, 10 Baochao Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: December 18, 7 pm – 1 am

Tel: 13552564898

Cost: 30 yuan at the door

Black Sesame Saturday Gourmet Cooking Class

Learn to make delicious noodles from scratch – including hand-pulled noodles and knife-cut varieties – and savory sauces to go with them. Cooking classes on different cuisines are held every Saturday.

Where: Black Sesame Kitchen, 3 Heizhima Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: December 19, 1-4 pm

Tel: 6403 5153

Cost: 300 yuan per person

China World Snowboard Day

This event gives local snowboarders their first chance to participate in an international snowboarding event that is now on its fourth year. Enjoy a full day of snowboarding at Dolomiti Resort in Hebei Province, which includes fun activities for beginners.

Where: Dolomiti, Xiqueliang, Sitaizui Village, Chongli County, Zhangjiakou City, Hebei

When: December 20

Tel: 8453 5499

Cost: Free

Three days with the Hakka

This China Culture Center "quickie" tour takes in the highlights of Fujian Province. Start with the colonial architecture on Gulangyu Island in Xiamen, then head to the interior where you'll explore the Hakka people's distinctive "tulou" architecture.

Where: China Culture Center, Room 101 Kent Center, 29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 26-28

Tel: 6432 9341

Cost: 6,000 yuan

(By Wei Ying)

New club offers live music on the east side



The One is the newest addition to the city's live show venues.

Photo by Lv Jiazuo

By Wang Yu

Concert fans who live on the east side gained a new hangout last weekend: The One, a live music club that opened with folk singer Laolang on the stage last Saturday.

Located at Loft 718 Art District in Ganluyuan, the club is housed in an old factory like other establishments in the area. The building, with its glass panels, looks like a spaceship from the outside and a greenhouse on the inside. In contrast to other Beijing clubs, The One's interior is decorated in white and it has

another entrance on the second floor with its own coat and bag check-in counter.

The two floors, measuring more than 1,800 square meters, can accommodate 800 people. Canadian architect Percy Laws designed the extra layer outside the original building that serves as a sound insulator.

Long Long, CEO of the club and a music producer, says The One combines a live house and a theater. He says its acoustics were designed according to recording studio standards, and it features the latest sound and light tech-

nology to ensure the quality of live shows.

The building includes a recording and mixing studio for rent, and that studio makes it more convenient to record live concerts.

"One of music's charms lies in live shows. As a musician, I know that the artist can only feel alive on stage. I think it's our responsibility to create a fantastic place not only for the artist, but also for the audience to have a totally different experience compared to listening to music on their computer," Long says.

Law says the building was a collaboration between him and Long. "Me and Long Long were friends long before we started to work together building The One. The club is in a sense a conversation between an architect and a musician."

Long says he wants the club to be a venue for both established and up-and-coming musicians.

The One

Where: Building 5, Loft 718 Media and Art District, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 8578 8851

Christmas heralds busy travel season

By Zhao Hongyi

Every Spring Festival, more than 300 million Chinese citizens return to their hometowns. The equivalent among expats occurs during the Christmas season.

Between early and mid December each year, foreign students and office employees fly home to spend the holiday with their families. But this year the number of travelers is much larger than last year's, resulting in pricier air tickets, say representatives from the International Air Transportation Association's China office.

"Generally speaking, the prices are at least double than those in the off season," says Peng Yulan, an officer at the association.

At the Capital International Airport, huge crowds of foreigners can be seen lining up at check-in counters every day.

Lagos Fernando, an employee at a US company, says many foreign companies in China give

their workers time off during the Christmas season, usually from early December till the New Year. "It's a routine we've followed for decades," he tells local media while waiting for an American Airlines flight to Chicago.

Li Qingli, an American Airlines manager, says the flights most in demand "are those bound for North America, Europe, Japan and South Korea." On December 6, the airline began selling economy-class tickets to most US cities for as low as 3,000 yuan.

A check-in counter staff for Hong Kong-based Dragon Airlines says many of their passengers – besides Hong Kong residents working on the mainland – are shoppers flying to the port city to take advantage of Christmas sales.

For travelers who still do not have tickets, "you need to book your tickets as soon as possible," Li says.

Market observers say the

next round of mass travel will occur in two months: before and after Spring Festival on February 14. Many of the travelers are expected to be foreign students spending their winter holiday in China and Chinese tourists

going abroad for the country's biggest holiday.

Air China, the country's national carrier, is offering a 5-percent discount to passengers who book tickets online or through travel agents until December 31.



The airport is packed with Christmas travelers.

CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

Can you recommend a place to get my hair straightened or cut? Ideally a Japanese salon or one with Japanese-trained staff.

There is a Japanese hair salon called Asakura on the first floor of Pacific Century Place (A2 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District), which has Japanese stylists. But it comes at a price: at least 280 yuan per cut. Why don't you first check out its website, asakura.com.cn/china/bj.html.

Do you know a decent bathhouse that won't cost an arm and a leg? I've lived in other Chinese cities with bathhouses where I could go any time and enjoy a sauna, jacuzzi, shower and pool for only 30 to 40 yuan. In this cold, my bones are aching for the sauna and steam room.

Yulong Bath has a swimming pool, hot spring, sauna and a special bath called the firedrake bath that you can enjoy for 48 yuan. But note that its special bath is very hot and contains various traditional Chinese medicines. For 88 yuan, you get an additional foot massage. Add another 20 yuan and you get a buffet meal.

Its on the south side of Run City, Beiyuan Jiayuan, Chaoyang District (To get there, take Subway Line 5 and get off at Beiyuan station). Open 10 am to 10 pm; tel. 8492 8808.

I noticed more and more organic food stores are opening in town, like Organic Farm and Derunwu. Are they any good?

Both places you mentioned have acquired a good reputation for their fresh produce. Derunwu offers more Chinese vegetables, while Organic Farm also sells organic daily necessities like toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo and hand cream.

I'm looking for a facial moisturizer that will protect my skin from the cold, but is reasonably priced.

Try Kiehl's star product, ultra facial cream (290 yuan for 50 milligrams). It's available at Shin Kong Plaza (87 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District; open 10 am to 10 pm; tel. 6530 5888).

I'm a new expat in Beijing from Norway. I'm wondering how to extend my visa. I came to Beijing in early October on a travel visa. But I want to stay here for one or two years. What can I do?

You need to have a Chinese employer – an officially registered one who can help you acquire a work visa. You can also apply for another three-month travel visa from an agency which may cost you 2,800 yuan. It's better to extend your visa before it expires. Otherwise, the immigration office will fine you 500 yuan each day after the expiration date, especially when you travel in China or leave the country at the airports and railway stations. But fortunately, the ceiling is set at 5,000 yuan.

(By Wei Ying)



Taiwanese stage actor David Wang may look masculine, but he has an ultrasensitive side in the play.

By He Jianwei

Hong Kong theater director Edward Lam's latest play *Man and Woman, War and Peace* is an update of the cliché battle-of-the-sexes.

In the play, Lam investigates the problems facing the sexes today, when the distinction between man and woman have blurred to confound age-old conflicts.

The director forecasts that men are regressing into boys and women are becoming the men of the future. "Everyone hungers for affection, but they don't know it will start a war," Lam says.



The play takes a new look at the cliché battle-of-the-sexes.



Director Edward Lam

Classical novels inspire Lam. His *Madame Bovary is Me* is a modern take on French writer Gustave Flaubert's masterpiece. *What is Man* is inspired by the classic *Outlaws of the Marsh* and *What is Fantasy* adapts *Journey to the West*.

This time, he looks to Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy's classic *War and Peace* to describe the relationship between man and woman.

For lovers, "love is a philosophy and quarrel an art," he says. Lam visited the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in 798 Art District last month to tell his Beijing audience what he thinks about the sexes.

The new play is about the relationship between a man and two women. Taiwanese stage actor David Wang and Hong Kong singer Denise Ho star as hosts of two competing talk shows that attempt to solve the relationship troubles of their respective audiences.

Overseen by a slightly schizophrenic producer, Ho and Wang force their own views on the air while hating each other with all the passion of a divorced couple. And in comes Taiwanese pop idol Ariel Lin's character, an infiltrator Wang plants in Ho's camp.

"On the surface, the story looks simple: it is like *The Ugly Truth* [a 2009 American romantic comedy film]," but the director goes deeper into today's gender roles.

"Instead of limiting ourselves to providing

entertainment, we're looking to achieve something that the average movie, play or Broadway show fails to do. The screwball comedies of the past tended to enlarge the contradictions between men and women: women were too feminine, and the men too masculine. These stories placed their focus on the power struggle and the fight for territory between the two sexes, but it's not like that today," he says.

Lam compares the tension between men and women to global warming:

on the surface, everything is going well, but serious problems are threatening to erupt and scorch everyone at any moment.

Fashion has been neutered. But the director says that carving away of gender extends far beyond clothing. "The masculine genes in women and the feminine genes in men are manifesting themselves in a way that blurs distinctions," he says.

Unlike women in the past, modern women have the tools to compete with men in school and the workplace.

"More women have realized they can live like a princess even without a prince," he says. "Like Carrie Bradshaw [a character in *Sex and City*], they can take enjoyment in buying shoes, going to the spa and eating what they want."

And so the director chose Ho to be the more "unisex" female lead. "People would expect us

"The masculine genes in women and the feminine genes in men are manifesting themselves in a way that blurs distinctions."

"We are living in a culture of egoism where men are into the 30s or 40s."

Man and Woman, War and Peace

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: December 23-26, 7:30pm

Admission: 100-880 yuan

Tel: 6417 0058, 6417 0068

e of the sexes

ake on the modern sexes



and Lam has interesting ideas on where the two sexes are headed.

to cast Lin Chi-ling [a Taiwanese super model] or Carina Lau [a Hong Kong actress] as the female lead, but I don't think they reflect modern women," he says.

Lam said Ho is the woman of the future. "I decided to cast her immediately. She is so full of vigor. In the world of Chinese language entertainment, it's very hard to find a female comedian like her. I consider her a symbol of youth and vigor."

Modern men, by contrast, "are unwilling to grow up," Lam says. "We are living in a culture of egoism whereas men are boys into their 30s or 40s."

A psychologist would say that for a man to mature, he must go from a period of ego to super ego. The super ego allows him to care about the outside world — to move from self-gratification to altruism.

Lam says education should play a role in that transition, but "unfortunately, ... many students go to university only for better life in the future. They think knowledge has no value beyond getting them a good job and a house," he says.

Traditionally, a woman married a husband older than her. This should be because he is more mature, but today, many prospective mates are

nothing but a man-child.

In the play, Wang presents himself as a macho playboy but is revealed to be, in Lam's words, "a woman." "Wang is very masculine on the surface, but he also has an ultrasensitive side," he says.

In the traditional view, men are less sensitive and less prone to suspicion and jealousy. But in Lam's view, there is something unexplored in men's psychology. "If you look back at the story of *Othello*, the wife is more like a man whereas he is more like the jealous wife," he says.

It was not until the rehearsal that Lam realized the three characters are similar to the characters in French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery's fairytale *The Little Prince*.

Ho is the little prince in Lam's play, insisting on getting to the bottom of the matter. The other woman, Lin, is like the fox. "Lin's role is magical. Every time she takes the stage, she has a different demeanor. We were all impressed by the cute roles she plays, like the foxy girl, cunning spy and cute angel," Lam says.

Wang's part is like the rose in the fairytale, living in his own fragile world. "Wang's aggressive nature is like the rose's thorns," he says.

After the play's run at the Poly Theater from December 23 to 26, Lam and his theater will pack up for a tour of Shanghai, Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province and Singapore.

"If you look back at the story of *Othello*, the wife is more like a man whereas he is more like the jealous wife."



Hong Kong singer Denise Ho, the "unisex" female lead, is regarded as the woman of the future.

Photos provided by The Bund

The fall of a kind 'terrorist'

By Charles Zhu

If he were born anywhere else, Zeitoun would have been a hero. But in saving six people during the flooding of Louisiana, his Arabness branded him a terrorist. Dave Eggers, a Bay Area resident, tells the story in a Dickensian account in *Zeitoun* (351pp, McSweeney's Books, \$24).

Abdulrahman Zeitoun was a middle-aged immigrant from Syria who owned a successful house-painting and contracting firm in New Orleans. He called America home and integrated into life in the country. He lived with his American-born wife Kathy – who converted from Christianity to Islam before meeting him – and their four children in an Uptown house. Kathy had Southern Baptist big-family roots and a previous failed marriage.

As Katrina approached, Kathy and the kids fled to her sister's home in Baton Rouge and then went west to Phoenix, but Abdulrahman stayed behind to take care of the house, his firm, the half-finished jobs of his clients and his properties.

Katrina hit the port city early Monday, August 29, 2005 – one day after the mayor ordered an evacuation. Zeitoun expected his house to leak, and

maybe some windows to shatter. As a precaution, he fetched a 16-foot aluminum canoe that he had purchased secondhand.

On the first day after the storm, there was nothing but a foot of sludge in the streets. On the second day, things changed. Zeitoun found the city was a sea of water after the levees broke loose. "He knew it would keep coming, would likely rise eight feet or more in his neighborhood and more elsewhere," Eggers writes. At that point, Zeitoun reached into his aquarium, knowing his fish wouldn't survive there. "He dropped them in the water that filled the house. It was the best chance they had."

At night, Zeitoun slept in a tent on the flat part of his roof. By day, he was out among the killing waters that buried New Orleans in garbage, oil, debris and the scraps of people's lives. "It smelled dirtier every day, a wretched mélange of fish and mud and chemicals."

He kept paddling around the city in his canoe. During his first day in the canoe, Zeitoun assisted in the rescue of five residents. "He had never felt such urgency and purpose," Eggers writes. "He was needed." Zeitoun saved elderly and dehydrated residents trapped in rotting, col-

lapsing homes: "Help me," came the voice of an old woman. Her patterned dress was spread out on the surface of the water like a great floating flower. Her legs dangled

below. She was holding on to a bookshelf."

Then came a nightmare from the mind of Kafka.

Six armed officers showed up at Zeitoun's house. The

Federal Emergency Management Agency, once a model of government disaster response and planning, is in this account a band of paramilitary thugs, seeing everything through the distorted lens of counterterrorism. Zeitoun was Syrian-American and at large in New Orleans, and that alone was suspicious.

Along with another Arab immigrant, he was accused of being an agent of terrorism, singled out from other prisoners for abuse and isolation and refused permission to make a phone call for weeks. His wife and a brother in Spain became frantic when he seemed to be missing from the face of the Earth. It took a whispered phone call from a pastor who had seen him in prison to tell them Abdulrahman was alive.

"This book does not attempt to be an all-encompassing book about New Orleans or Hurricane Katrina," Eggers writes in his author's note. However, his Dickensian account of Zeitoun is food for thought about the American dystopia.



Personal secrets laid bare

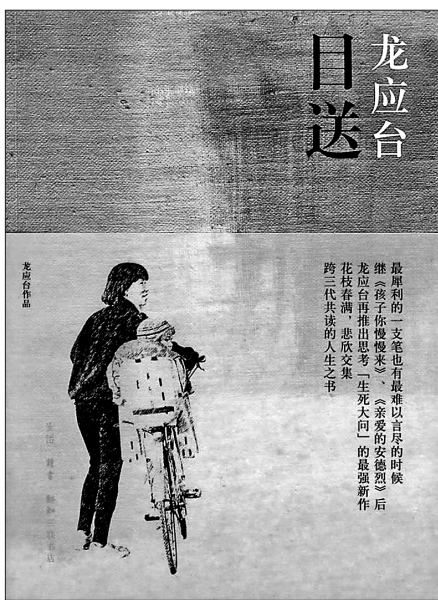
By He Jianwei

Readers who are quick to shed tears should probably avoid reading Taiwanese author Lung Ying-tai's latest book *Mu Song* (*Gaze After*, 281pp, SDX Joint Publishing Company, 39 yuan) in public. The book describes parting moments in her life: something sure to strike many readers.

"The book is about my private life, so it should be read somewhere private. That's also the reason that I don't like to discuss this book with my readers," Lung said during a Beijing visit for the book release.

One of her friends wrote a letter advising Lung to sell this book wrapped in a "Please do not open it in public" bag like Playboy and other adult magazines.

The book has 73 short narratives about life's uncertain and fragile moments, including the death of Lung's father, the aging of her mother, her years with only her two sons and an encounter with her elderly brother after several decades of estrangement.



Lung said she never understood the relationship between parent and child until she was in her 50s: parents are predestinated to watch their children drift further and further away forever. "It's like standing at one end of the road and looking at the child's back until he or she eventually turns a corner and vanishes. It's like sending a message: 'Just stay there and follow me with your eyes,'" she said.

In retrospect, she sees herself as a failed wife yet a

successful mother. "I made delicious cakes for them, but when they grew up, they became freaks and were out of my control. I didn't know how to deal with them," she said. It is the reason she wrote a book *Dear Andreas* – letters between her eldest son and herself.

And to her own parents, it was only at the end that she learned how to be a daughter. "I learned aging and death from my father. After he was gone, I started looking after my mother. I found I was very slow to learn what a daughter's job is," she said.

Her mother has senile dementia and frequently cannot recognize her daughter. Lung treats her like a child, painting her mother's fingernails and prowling the streets at night in search of food when her mother cannot fall asleep.

Lung's language is clear and simple, but soft and soulful. Under her pen, the book is a notebook of death and life: one full of sorrow and beauty.

CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

The White Tiger

By Aravind Adiga, 304pp, Free Press, 70 yuan

Balam Halwai is a complicated man: a servant, philosopher, entrepreneur and murderer. For seven nights, by the scattered light of a preposterous chandelier, Halwai tells the terrible and transfixing story of how he came to be a success with nothing but his own wits to help him along.

The Shack

By William P. Young, 256pp, Windblown Media, 105 yuan

Mackenzie Allen Philips' youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of his Great Sadness, Philips receives

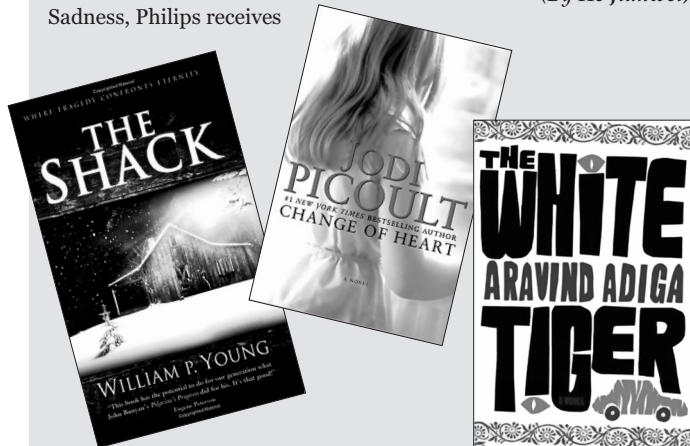
a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.

Change of Heart

By Jodi Picoult, 480pp, Washington Square Press, 150 yuan

One moment June Nealon was happily looking forward to years of laughter and adventure with her family, and the next, she was staring into a future that was as empty as her heart. Now her life is a waiting game: waiting for time to heal her wounds, waiting for justice. In short, waiting for a miracle. For Shay Bourne, life holds no more surprises. The world has given him nothing, and he has nothing to offer it in return. In a heartbeat something changes all that. Now, he has one last chance for salvation, and it lies with Nealon's 11-year-old daughter, Claire. But between Shay and Claire is an ocean of bitter regrets, past crimes and the rage of a mother who has lost her child.

(By He Jianwei)



By Wang Yu

Modern Luddites are always on the search for something tangible in a digital world: be it film cameras or their grandparents' typewriters.

It is no surprise that music fans are also returning to vinyl albums.

Music fans in their 50s have long stuck to their classic stereo systems. But now young people who grew up in the age of cassette tapes and CDs are looking for the warm tones of the analog past.

Many had their first encounter with LPs while searching for music in the flea market. Old albums are much larger than CDs, and that leaves more room to appreciate cover art.

Spinning the sounds of history

Heymy slides out his Pink Floyd LP and lays the record on the turntable. He presses the play button, and after two seconds the noise of tiny scratches transforms into David Gilmour's delay guitar riffs. The sound is warm and real in a way digital audio has remained unable to duplicate.

"But this record can only be played about 300 times, that's why records before the CD era used to sell billions: fans had to buy new ones when they wore out the first edition," he says. Heymy plays in bands and works for a weekly as a reporter.

Most of Heymy's albums were bought in Sydney, Australia while he was in college. When he moved back to China, he was forced to abandon one box of vinyls to a store-room. Only his favorite artists' LPs made the trip back to Beijing — albums like *Heaven Chemistry* by Oasis, *Let it Be* by The Beatles and *Room on Fire* by The Strokes.

The vinyl scene is much bigger in the West, where secondhand shops stay stocked with all periods of rock. He also collects jazz albums by Miles Davis because he says the old-time tunes only sound right on old-time technology.

But the jump to vinyl is an odd one in the digital age.

Unlike people those who go back to film cameras, these record buyers never saw LP albums in their youth. Vinyl record players were few and far between in Chinese families, and the first albums by Chinese artists never appeared until the 1990s.

For most, music came in the late 1990s in the form of saw-gashed "dakou" CDs by foreign pop bands that were sold off as scrap.

Zhao Xinyu, a 28-year-old IT employee, bought his first vinyl records of Morrissey and Lou Reed in the summer of 2006 before he moved to Beijing from Xi'an. He spent 100 yuan on a Kenwood automatic record player to go with them at a local flea market similar to Panjia-yuan. Today his collection of rock and folk albums is pushing 300.

"At first, the most attractive thing was the cover and the booklet. It is hard to see the

details on a CD cover. But the whole design becomes clear when you see it on the cover of an LP. That alone would make the albums worth collecting," Zhao says.

One year later, he moved to Beijing, with his 100 records. He traded in his old Kenwood for a Technics 1210mk direct drive player designed for DJs. But as an IT worker, his hobby leaves him a bit alienated.

"All my friends are the kind of people who only worry about earning money, buying an apartment and settling down. Vinyl records are my only outlet," Zhao says.

"At first, the most attractive thing was the cover and the booklet. It is hard to see the details on a CD cover. But the whole design becomes clear when you see it on the cover of an LP. That alone would make the albums worth collecting."
— Zhao Xinyu, fan of vinyl record

His most expensive record was Radiohead's *In Rainbows*, which he ordered on the band's website. It cost 600 yuan and he had to wait 30 days for the two-disc set to arrive. The British band first released the album in MP3, allowing fans to download and "pay whatever you like."

"After downloading the whole album, I bought the vinyl to support my favorite band. Of course, it also proved that their giving out the MP3s was a creative promotion," Zhao says.

Compared with the clean sound of CDs, music recorded on vinyl is warmer and contains details usually modified or lost by digital technology. Famous bands such as The White Stripes often ask fans to listen to them on vinyl rather than on CD.

In Beijing, flea markets are the best place to hunt for cheap records and players. Rare stuff can be found in record stores on Gulou and Xijiekou. Online stores on taobao.com can offer better deals if you have the time to hunt.

But the biggest domestic scene is in Guangzhou, where the port's residents have been connecting with long-time collectors in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Chen Xu first discovered records in 2004.

During his third year in college, he opened LP-Times, an online store for record players run out of Guangzhou.

After graduation, running the store became a full time job. Hi-Fi lovers can find a variety of record players in the shop, both new and used. As a music lover, he likes Western classic rock. He has spent 10,000 on a master disc and hundreds for the soundtrack of the classic romance flick *Ghost*.

"I saw vinyl records for the first time in that movie. It took me years to find its soundtrack on vinyl. But most discs really



Vinyl has a warmth that has been lost in the digital era.

Photos by Song Nannan

are not that expensive: about 20 to 30 yuan each," Chen says.

As a shop owner, Chen has many machines of his own: from automatic players to high-end players which require the listener to manually adjust the angle of the tone arm and the cartridge for optimal sound.

"Before CDs, record players were everywhere in foreign families. It's just a home electric device, nothing mysterious," Chen says.

But unlike some audiophiles, he never lets the pursuit of sound interfere in his enjoyment of the music.

"I can listen to the music at work or at night and I can collect records. It wouldn't be fun to be chasing down strange and exotic hardware if I never intended to use it," Chen says.

Where to buy vinyl records in Beijing?

Blue Line Records

Where: 62 Xijiekou Bei Dajie, Xicheng District
Tel: 6651 1363

Wanshanghui Secondhand Market

Where: 2 Zhushikou Dong Dajie, Chongwen District



Album covers alone are collectable.

Precious stones set in gold and silver



Spanish designer Paloma Sanchez at her Nali Patio boutique

By Annie Wei

Spanish native Paloma Sanchez has loved precious stones since she was a child. The graduate of the Gemological Institute of America finally fulfilled her dream of becoming a jewelry designer when she opened Paloma, a new boutique at Nali Patio.

Her designs in 18-carat white and yellow gold and sterling silver highlight the beauty of rough or uncut stones.

"The very slow growth in nature under very specific heat and pressure and the alignment of atoms give them their fantastic beauty, light, color, shape and amazing properties. There's almost no need to add anything to them to make them into jewelry. Every stone is a piece of art and metal is only meant to give support. It is impossible to find two precious stones that are exactly the same," Sanchez says.

All her creations contain her signature little gold or silver doves. "Paloma" is Spanish for dove.

Sanchez says more and more Chinese women between the ages of 30 and 50 are looking to independent designers for jewelry. Instead of buying traditional 24-carat gold bracelets or necklaces, local women are showing a growing taste for more creative, exaggerated and unique designs, she says.

Sanchez's designs come in two lines: 18-carat gold and sterling silver, priced from 900 to 40,000 yuan.

Paloma

Where: A115, Nali Patio, 81 Sanlitun Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 6501 2706



(Left) Pyramid-shaped rough citrine quartz, orange sapphires and peridots in a black sterling silver ring, which says "aggression," 2,800 yuan. (Center) A multicolored sapphire flower ring in pink sterling silver, conveying delicacy and sophistication, 4,000 yuan.

African agate pendant set in 24-carat gold and embracing a triangular pink tourmaline. The chain is 18-carat gold-plated sterling silver. The pendant and chain are 2,000 yuan each.

Photos provided by Paloma



Demeter fragrance, 280 yuan
Photo provided by Demeter

Everything has a smell

By Annie Wei

Who says bottled fragrances are only about flowers, fruits and spices?

The opening of Demeter Fragrance Library at The Village heralds a new discovery for local shoppers. This New York-based company sells fragrances derived from unremarkable everyday scents such as dirt, tomatoes and chocolate chip cookies.

The shop offers more than 300 types of fragrances, the best sellers of which are "snow" and "sugarcane." Demeter's website describes the former scent as "chilling, cool, clean and fresh, with a touch of dust (necessary to form flakes) and earth (upon which to rest)."

How about "rain"? Demeter says our nose can tell that rain is coming. Compared to dry air, humid air transmits smells faster, and thus, rain is associated with moist air. The brand has captured this complex sensory moment in a bottle.

Demeter fragrances do not come cheap, however; they start at 280 yuan. But if you're wise, you'll get them at its online shop at \$10 (68 yuan) a bottle.

Demeter

Where: Basement, The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6417 6110

Design dialogue between China and Scandinavia

By He Jianwei

Chang & Biorck sells a range of house wares, including enamelware, fabrics, cushions, lanterns and tableware, which fuse Scandinavian design with Chinese aesthetics and craftsmanship.

India Chang, an ethnic Chinese raised in Denmark and educated in Italy, founded the brand with Eva Biorck in 2004. Growing up in Denmark – a country with a revered history in modern design – it seemed only natural to the women to offer designer products that reflect Scandinavian simplicity and functionality. They opened a store at The Village last month.

The brand features a wide range of fabrics made by Gunilla Lagerhem Ullberg, one of Sweden's foremost textile designers. Since 1987, Ullberg has been creating carpets for Kasthall – Sweden's hundred-year-old carpet manufacturer – where she is now chief in-house designer.

Nature is a key element in Ullberg's pattern and color combinations. She likes mixing and matching different patterns and colors,

for example, flowers with stripes, squares with stars, butterflies with dots.

Ullberg finds her inspiration predominantly from the fashion world, nature and her travels overseas. "I just love browsing fashion boutiques and studying the materials, textures and details of products," she says.

Her contemporary and elegant fabrics for Chang & Biorck incorporate traditional Chinese materials like silk and bamboo. Her fabric "Tiao," using Chinese silk, won first prize at the Stockholm Design Fair in 2003.

Chang & Biorck also collaborates with Swedish designer Marie-Louise Hellgren, who works mainly in ceramics and whose products are characterized by simplicity, functionality and elegance.

She has designed teapots and cups for the brand, including an egg-shaped pot. One of her other creations, Ao and Tu (98 yuan), are saucers symbolizing the sun and moon, inspired by her visit to the altar at the Temple of Heaven. The saucers can be purchased individually as each design can stand alone.



Chang & Biorck designs, starting from 98 yuan

Photo provided by Chang & Biorck

Chang & Biorck recently worked with Swedish designer Sara Odman, who emphasizes organic flow patterns. For the store's children's wear collection, she created designs inspired by springtime trees in Beijing's parks. All the clothes use low-

impact dye printed on organic cotton.

Chang & Biorck

Where: Unit 2-19A, 1/F Building 2, The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8400 2296

Champagne to go with Chinese dishes

By Ammie Wei

If champagne is beyond your budget but you're dying for a reason to indulge, then look no farther than the holiday season – a time to celebrate family, friendships and the year's accomplishments in luxury.

Last Wednesday, the China office of Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (CIVC), a trade association representing the grape growers and houses of France's Champagne province, hosted a champagne and food event at Dadong roast duck restaurant that gave tips on how to pair champagne with Chinese dishes.

Wang Wei, director of Bureau du Champagne en Chine, CIVC's Beijing office, said most people regard champagne as an expensive drink meant only for special occasions or evening functions. But sparkling wine comes in a variety of flavors that can be enjoyed even during ordinary meals, she said.

The event at Dadong featured chefs from leading Beijing restaurants who prepared four regional cuisines – Sichuan, Shandong, Cantonese and Jiangsu/Zhejiang. Each chef prepared two dishes that were paired with champagne.

Seven wine experts and a dozen food writers attended the event. Most attendees said light dishes, particularly those from Jiangsu and Zhejiang, went best with champagne.

Champagne sales in China increased from 21,000 bottles in 2000 to 900,000 bottles last year, CIVC data revealed.

Cantonese



Deep-fried seafood by Yugongyupo

Yugongyupo seafood chain has seven branches in town.

Where: Fulu, Beisihuan Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11am – late

Tel: 6491 2735

Champagne Jacquesson Cuvee

Made up of 39 percent chardonnay, 25 percent pinot noir and 36 percent pinot meunier, this bubbly has a strong nose of pears, apples and citrus with hints of flowers. More buckets of fruit show up on the palate as a tart backbone, which give way to a gentle and creamy fruit salad. It is all about juicy fruit with a mouth-wetting tartness.

Cost: 858 yuan

Where: D-Lounge, 4 Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6593 7710

Tarlant Brut Tradition NV

This champagne is 50 percent pinot noir, 35 percent pinot meunier and 15 percent chardonnay. It has a medium-gold color, a notably fine mousse and a subtle nose with a complex of ripe pinot-rich fruits and a slight citrusy and toasty aroma. Its structure is intense yet delicate, with a high acidity and deep flavor that tastes lively and long in the mouth.

Cost: 521 yuan

Where: Room 2804, Building 8, Yard 3, Guomei Diyicheng, 155 Qingnian Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5206 3020



Tomato mushroom salad by Dadong

Photos provided by Bureau du Champagne en Chine

Shandong

Restaurant Dadong is one of the most popular Peking duck brands among expats, this chain serves meticulously prepared dishes that cater to Western taste.

Where: 5/F Jinbaohui, 88 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8522 1111

Drappier Blanc de Blancs

This pure chardonnay champagne is produced exclusively from the first pressing. It has an elegant bouquet and is fresh in the mouth – combines fineness and richness.

Cost: 450 yuan

Where: DIASIA

Tel: 021-6248 0122

Taittinger Brut Reserve

This straw-yellow champagne is 40

percent chardonnay and 60 percent pinot. It has fine bubbles and both discreet and persistent mousse. Its bouquet is expressive and open, with the aromas of peach, white flowers and vanilla pod. It has the flavors of fresh fruit and honey.

Cost: 523 yuan

Where: All Jenny Lou's branches (10 percent discount till the end of February 2010)



Vegetable and beef rib by Xiangong

Huaiyang

Xiangong at China Hotel serves traditional Chinese dishes that appeal to the Western palate.

Where: 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 2 pm, 5-10 pm

Tel: 6505 2266

Duval-Leroy Fleur de Champagne Brut NV

This straw-gold and light-bubble champagne is 75 percent pinot noir and 25 percent chardonnay. It has the aroma of dried biscuits and chocolate and tastes soft in the mouth.

Cost: 643 yuan

Where: Room 709, Ruichen Guoji, 13, Nongzhanguan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6445 5787

G.H. Mumm Vintage 1998

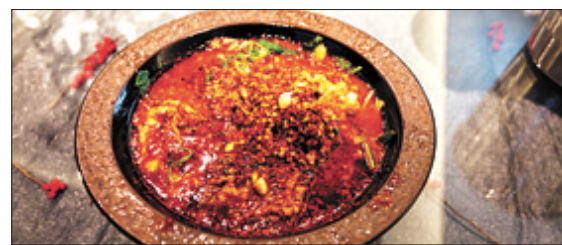
1998 is an exceptional year with optimum grape maturity. This champagne, which is 69 percent pinot noir and 31 percent chardonnay, opens with the delicate aromas of fresh flowers and candied citrus. It develops more virile hints of dried fruits and nuts, and finishes with notes of fresh spices.

Cost: 523 yuan

Where: All Jenny Lou's branches (10 percent discount till the end of February 2010)



Sichuan



Boiled beef by Meizhou Dongpo

Meizhou Dongpo is popular with Sichuan natives for its authentic flavor at reasonable prices. It has seven restaurants scattered in Dongcheng, Chaoyang and Haidian districts.

Where: Building 1, Tuanjiehu Dong Li, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 4 am next day

Tel: 8598 0158

Champagne Philipponnat Brut Reserve Rose

This 93 percent chardonnay and 7 percent pinot noir has an orange-pink color, the spicy aromas of cherry pit, wild strawberry and black pepper. Weighty but focused on the palate, it has sweet red berry, fresh plum and smoky black cardamom flavors.

Cost: 845 yuan

Where: Aussino Cellar, 1/F Swissotel residential tower, 66 Gongti Bei Lu, Dongcheng District

Tel: 6552 0133, 6552 0233

Piper Cuvee Sublime

Made up of 35 percent pinot noir and 65 percent chardonnay, this bubbly encompasses the aromas of African vilots, dried apricots, sultana raisins, caramelized pear, crunchy praline, nougat, cinnamon and dates. It tastes soft and warm, with hints of vanilla, rum pastry, gingerbread and candied lemon peel.

Cost: 550 yuan

Where: Lufthansa shopping mall, 52 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6465 1188



The return of the Godfather of Chinese Rock

By Wang Yu

It was on May 9, 1989 in a concert celebrating the Year of World Peace at the Workers' Stadium that Cui Jian sang his classic "Nothing to My Name" for the first time in public. It was also the first rock performance at a major venue in China.

Cui was only 24.

Three years later, on March 12, Cui's first solo concert *Rock and Roll on the New Long March*, named after his first album, took place at the Beijing Exhibition Center Theater. Tens of thousands of young people descended on the venue, cementing Cui's status as a symbol of China's new culture. Books on contemporary Chinese art dub him "the Godfather of Chinese Rock."

On Christmas Eve, Cui returns to the stage where it all began 20 years ago for the finale of his 2009 concert tour, *Rock and Roll on the New Long March V21*. His die-hard fans, already in their 40s and 50s, are expected to be joined by a new generation of rock lovers.

Cui was born into an ethnic Korean family. His father was a professional trumpet player and his mother a member of a Korean minority dance troupe. An accomplished classical trumpet player, Cui became a member of the prestigious Beijing Philharmonic Orchestra in 1981. It was then he became smitten by Western rock and roll heard through tapes spirited

into the country by tourists and foreign students. Inspired by the likes of Bob Dylan and Simon and Garfunkel, he learned to play the guitar.

In 1984, Cui and six other classical musicians formed the band Seven Ply Board. In the same year, he recorded his first album, *Langzigui*.

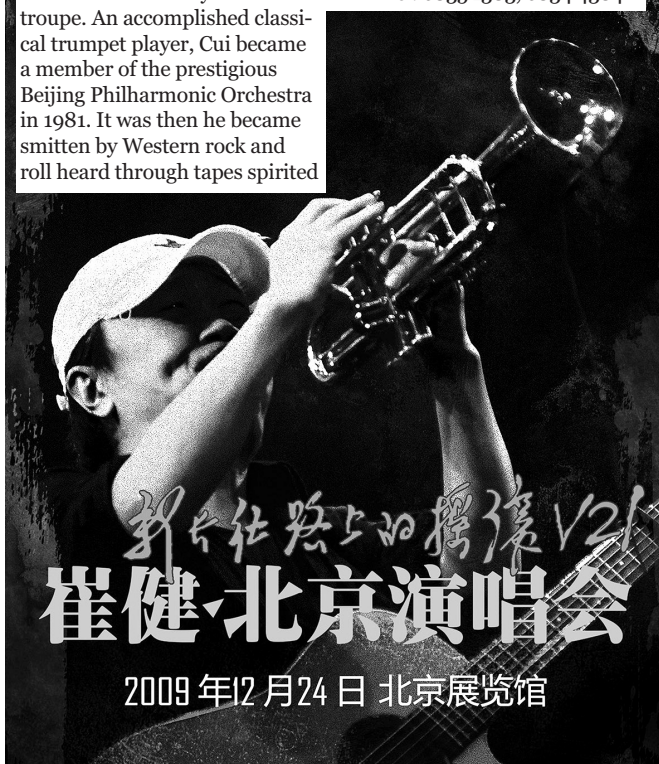
In the mid-80s, Western rock music found its way into the country's underground culture. These included works by the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Talking Heads and the Police, who greatly influenced Cui.

Two decades later, Cui is still on stage and rocking for a new generation. "I've seen many young people in my concerts, which I didn't expect. People have told me not to make music for young people because that will drive away my old fans. But I think music is an adventure of the mind and I can share mine with the post-80s people too," Cui says.

Rock and Roll on the New Long March V21

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: December 24, 7:30 pm
Admission: 380-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6835 1383, 6834 4384



崔健·北京演唱会

2009年12月24日 北京展览馆

5

Friday, December 18

Exhibition The Kingdom of Illusions

Where: Galerie Paris-Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 30, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9262

Xu Di Oil Painting Exhibition

Where: Wan Fung Art Gallery, 35-37 Guanyintang Wenhua Dajie, 2A Wangsiying, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31, daily, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6523 3319

Movie

Hana and Alice

Where: Sculpting in Time (inside Beihang University), 37 Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8231 0664



The Notebook

Where: Room 415, Yifu Building, Beijing Foreign Studies University, 2 Xisanhuan Bei Lu, Haidian District
When: 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8881 1114

Nightlife

Go East

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 100 yuan, VIP 160 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

6

Saturday, December 19

Exhibition Layered City – Quotidian and Modernity

Where: Space II, Gallery Artside Beijing, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 31, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am - 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9335



Waves of Mooning – Zhao Yanan Solo Exhibition

Where: Line Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu,

Chaoyang District
When: Until January 5, 2010, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9916

Movie

The Big Blue

Where: Room 2105A, Zhongsheng Plaza, 2 Beifengwo Lu, Xuanwu District
When: 6:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5191 6192

Nightlife

Because I Care

Where: Wild Strawberry Cafe, 52 Houhai Nanyan, Dongcheng District
When: 3 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6403 6532

If I'm a Singer

Where: Hot Cat Club, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District
When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6400 7868

Upcoming

Nightlife

2009 Hoochie Coochie Gentleman

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: December 24, 9:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611

Stage in January

Concert

The Mozart Symphony Orchestra of London New Year Concert

Where: Haidian Theater, 84 Huangzhuang Lu, Haidian District
When: January 1, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-1,680 yuan
Tel: 8253 3588

The Vienna Johann Strauss Orchestra New Year Concert

Where: Century Theater, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: January 1, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-880 yuan
Tel: 6466 3015

Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 4, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-800 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

The Blue Danube – Youth Chamber Philharmonic NRW of Germany

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District
When: January 10, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-580 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Berlin Philharmonic String Quartet

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: January 13-14, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Merry Widow – China Philharmonic Orchestra 2009-2010 Season

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 22-24, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Dance

Carmen

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: January 1-2, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Sovereign's Night by the China Oriental Song and Dance Ensemble

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: January 26-31, 2010, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,000 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Sunday, December 20

Exhibition The Story of Youth – Young Artist Group Exhibition

Where: Dandeli Art Space, Image Base Beijing (northwest corner), Building 1, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until March 5, 2010, daily, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6770 8966

Translucide

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Commu-

nity, 32 Baizhiwan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 10, 2010, daily, 10 am - 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 5876 0600

Movie

Tmavomodry Svet (Dark Blue World) and Les Chansons d'Amour (Love Songs)

Where: Multi-functional Hall, 1/F China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District
When: 1 pm

Admission: 40 yuan for the two movies
Tel: 8229 6267

Nightlife

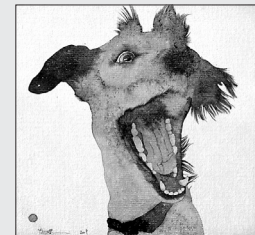
Listen to Warm Songs in the Cold Winter

Where: D-22 bar, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6264 3177

Pest Productions

Where: MAO Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080



The Story of Youth – Young Artist Group Exhibition at Dandeli Art Space

Shelve your mouthwash to avoid cancer

Mouthwash a hidden carcinogen?

Some mouthwashes are more dangerous than wine or beer because their concentrations of alcohol can be as high as 26 percent, according to research published in the latest *British Dental Journal*.

Alcohol is also said to cause burning, dryness and oral pain.

"The evidence shows an association that we should take seriously because oral cancer is a significant disease that has been rising over the last 10 years, especially among younger people," Robin Seymour, a researcher of Newcastle University said. "The big concern is that people who smoke and drink heavily could be adding another risk factor when they use these kinds of mouthwashes regularly."

Seymour said laboratory studies showed that the alcohol in mouthwash can allow cancer-causing substances such as nicotine to penetrate into the soft tissue of the mouth more easily.

And that can cause a toxic breakdown of one of alcohol's components called acetaldehyde: another carcinogen. Swishing of mouthwash can distribute this component throughout the mouth.

In addition to the risk of oral cancer, alcohol-containing mouthwashes are also reported to have other adverse effects on oral structures and functions. Alcohol is added to mouthwash not to destroy bacteria, but to act as a carrier agent for active ingredients such as menthol, eucalyptol and thymol which help to penetrate plaque.

The review reported evidence from an international study of 3,210 people which found daily mouthwash use was a "significant risk factor" for head and neck cancer.

The effects were worst in smokers, who had a nine-time greater risk of cancer in the oral cavity, pharynx and larynx. Those who drank alcohol had five times the risk.

Seymour said it would be prudent for dentists to recommend the disuse of mouthwash, though the British Dental Association's spokesman said the evidence was "not conclusive" and more research was needed.

By Venus Lee

Oral hygiene is an important part of overall health as the mouth is the gateway to the body. Experts say oral health has a correlation with diabetes and heart disease, so good oral hygiene is more important than ever.

But a recent study gives a bad name to mouthwashes, one commonly used oral hygiene product. According to the findings, mouthwashes containing alcohol may cause oral cancer. Experts say dentists should advise patients against these products.

Chemical-free therapies

"Although many popular mouthwashes may help to control dental plaque and gingivitis, they should only be used for a short time and only as an adjunct to other oral hygiene measures such as brushing and flossing," said Li Fengyuan, stomatologist of Xuanwu Hospital of the Capital University of Medical Sciences.

She said people do not need to use harsh chemical products to fight gingivitis, bad breath or tooth plaque. There are many all-natural substances for oral care that are effective and inexpensive.

"Natural therapies for oral hygiene can boost your gum-disease-fighting power both inside and out," she said. Here are some popular natural therapies used today.

1. Herbal therapies

Herbs with antibacterial properties can be used as part of your oral hygiene routine and to make your breath smell sweeter. Essential oils like almond, peppermint and spearmint can be rubbed around the base of the gums.

"Tea tree oil has even more bacterial-fighting agents than the essential oils previously mentioned," Li said. "Adding a few drops of tea tree oil to your

toothbrush during regular brushing will leave your gums feeling clean and invigorated."

Green tea has been credited as one of the best natural therapies for oral hygiene. It is used in China as an oral rinse for daily mouth care and contains powerful antioxidants that also help to boost the immune system.

2. Vitamin therapies

Vitamin C is known to boost your immune system and can aid in fighting the growth of anaerobic bacteria that cause plaque. It also helps fight off other illnesses such as colds.

Calcium and Vitamin D together than keep the teeth strong and gums healthy. Phosphorus, Magnesium, Vitamin A and beta-carotene are also needed and easily obtained in a daily multivitamin.

3. Baking soda

Ordinary baking soda is often accounted as one of the best oral antibacterial substances out there. When brushing with baking soda, make sure the soda is thoroughly moistened and that you do not press too hard on the brush. For extra cleansing power, rinse the toothbrush in food-grade hydrogen peroxide before brushing.

Tips for oral hygiene

1. Floss before brushing teeth.

Flossing is one of the most essential practices. It is the best initial cleaning for teeth and gums. The proper "C-shape" up and down motion of the wax strip or tape gets rid of small debris left in between the teeth and gums after a meal. Without flossing, brushing may even be deemed useless.

2. Don't brush too hard. Brushing harder will not remove more plaque. It may even abrade the enamel and damage the gums. Using a soft bristled toothbrush and brushing in a circular motion will help avoid abrasion.

3. Choose a fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride can kill bacteria and fight cavities. But fluoride takes time to take effect and is only absorbed after at least 2 minutes of contact.

4. Brush your tongue. Start cleaning your tongue on a regular basis to treat bad breath and remove bacteria. A toothbrush or a specialized tongue brush can be used.

5. Replace your toothbrush frequently. Every three months is adequate, but sooner if the bristles

wear out. If you have a cold or other illness, change to a new toothbrush following recovery.

6. Avoid sugary snacks and carbonated beverages. These attack and erode teeth surfaces. A new study published in *Registered Dental Hygienist* magazine shows sports and energy drinks are just as bad for your teeth, or worse, than juice and soda. Try to limit these beverages to when needed and use a straw to limit exposure. Rinse with water after drinking.

7. Avoid tobacco. Smoking or chewing tobacco is an absolute no-no. Tobacco products cause serious health problems such as cavities, gum disease, heart problems, precancerous mouth sores and oral cancer.

8. Chew sugar-free gum. Chewing sugar-free gum after eating can help reduce the amount of acid in the mouth and dislodge particles on and between the teeth.

9. Visit the dentist regularly. See your dentist twice a year for a thorough oral checkup. He can recommend products to assist in preventing or reducing the effects of oral cancer.

CFP Photo



Heavenly winter soak

Five popular hot spring resorts

By Zhang Dongya

At winter's bleakest, Beijingers find respite in hot spring resorts. The city and suburbs offer many choices for a nice, warm soak, on top of outdoor activities like hiking and skiing.

China Travel Depot, the inbound tourism website of China Youth Travel Service (CYTS), recommends five resorts to *Beijing Today* readers. It has affordable tour packages to all the destinations.



Indoor hot spring pool at Club China Chic

Photo provided by Club China Chic



Soaking with rose petals adds romance to the cold season.



Water parks add fun to hot spring resorts.



Merry Water World in Tulip Garden features a huge indoor water park where visitors can go sliding and floating.
Photos provided by Tulip Garden

Private hot spring pools

Tulip Garden is located near the airport, on Dongwei Road, Chaoyang District. It was named after the flowers that blanket the area in spring and summer.

Among the resort's private rooms are 20 that pipe in hot spring water. These include our highly recommended A and B duplexes constructed last year. The A duplexes are four-star standard rooms with their own hot spring pool; the Bs are two-bedroom suites, again with a pool. The wooden structures have tatami mats, in the tradition of their Japanese counterparts.

Tulip also has a huge indoor water park called Merry Water World, where visitors can go sliding, floating or splashing to their heart's content.

Tulip Garden

Where: Dongwei Lu, Chaoyang District
Getting there: Take the Airport Expressway to Weigou, then turn off Dongwei Lu, then turn right driving for another 800 meters

Admission at Merry Water World: 138 yuan on weekdays, 168 yuan on weekends; 480 yuan for a standard room with public hot spring pool, 580 yuan for a room with private pool

Open: 1-10:30 pm weekdays, 9 am – 10:30 pm weekends
Tel: 5166 6846

Chic downtown getaway

Club China Chic, located in Sanyuanqiao, is the getaway most accessible from downtown. It began operations just a few months ago and will not open officially until next year, so visitors get a 30-percent discount.

The place is compact but meticulously

designed: both its lounge and indoor and outdoor hot spring pools are small. It has three indoor pools offering spa services with milk and rose petals, and five outdoor pools infused with traditional herbal medicines. The pools are labeled according to the herbs they contain, so visitors can decide where to soak depending on their health concerns. Rocks, mini waterfalls and pavilions are part of the landscape.

The admission fee includes a buffet dinner. On the building's second floor is a cafe with books and music.

Visitors who stay overnight can get a room with a private hot spring pool that offers a view of Lido Park. The rooms are decorated simply but tastefully.

The club features a spa with rooms decorated according to exotic locations: Hawaii, Turkey, Bali, Japan and the Aegeans. It offer treatments by professional massage therapists.

The building's underground parking area has a path that leads directly to the spa – a big draw to celebrities wanting a bit of privacy to unwind.

Club China Chic

Where: East of Lido Park, 6 Fangyuanxi Lu, Chaoyang District

Getting there: Head north on Jingshun Lu, then turn right on Jiangtaiqiao. Take another right at the first traffic light, which will take you to the resort

Admission: 288 yuan (includes buffet dinner), 1,680 yuan for a standard room, 1,980 yuan for a business room

Open: 1:30 pm – 1 am next day

Tel.: 5827 1199

Continued on page 21...



Most outdoor pools are infused with traditional herbal medicines.

Photos provided by Tulip Garden

... continued from page 20

Traditional, historical setting

Jiuhua Spa and Resort is one of Beijing's earliest and most popular hot spring resorts. The water's source is in Xiaotang Mountain, known for its hot springs for more than three centuries.

Stories say the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) imperial family frequented Xiaotangshan, and that locals have taken therapeutic baths there to treat rheumatism and other ailments for the past 200 years.

The resort's main attraction is a big lake surrounded by small hot spring pools. The pools are labeled according to the herbal medicines they contain to serve as a guide to visitors. Paths leading to the pools are paved with cobble stones, which massage the soles.

Beside the lake is a spring that spews hot gas. The water temperature can get as hot as 80 C, which can reportedly boil eggs.

Jiuhua has two courtyards, each with five rooms, a lounge and a meeting room. Each courtyard can accommodate at least 10 people – suitable for excursions with family or friends. Each yard has both an indoor and outdoor hot spring pool. Visitors traditionally sip tea while taking a dip.

Jiuhua also has wooden and stone rooms for couples or smaller groups of three to five.

Jiuhua Spa and Resort

Where: Daliushu Huandao, Xiaotangshan, Changping District

Getting there: Take Bus 984 to Jiuhuashan-zhuang stop, or take Subway Line 5 to Tiantongyuan station, then transfer to Bus 984

Admission: 300 yuan

Open: 8:30 am – 2 pm

Tel: 8199 7334

In nature's bosom

Fengshan Hot Spring resort, tucked in Fengshan Mountain, Changping District, is near tourist attractions such as Mangshan National Forest Park and Shisanling

Ming Tombs.

The resort, which resembles a spacious tropical greenhouse, has small and big indoor hot spring pools on two floors. The small one can fit at most two persons, while the big pool can accommodate 10 or more. Some pools are equipped with sensors that automatically provide water.

The resort also has outdoor pools located in the mountain, but this is not popular in winter. The few souls who brave the frigid air are rewarded with soothingly hot water. Some even get in the mood for a drink.

Fengshan Hot Spring

Where: 10 Mangshan Lu, Changping District

Getting there: Take Badaling Expressway, then turn off at Exit 16. Continue to Xiguan Huandao, turn right at Dongguan intersection, then turn left until you reach the resort

Admission: 268 yuan

Open: 24 hours

Tel: 6071 1188

Convenient, fun location

Located 20 kilometers north of central Beijing, Leisure City has a favorable and convenient location. On the north, it lies beside the source of Wenyu River, Beijing's main river; 2 miles to its south are two of Beijing's largest residential communities: Huilongguan and Tiantongyuan.

The resort has indoor and outdoor pools containing herbal medicine. It also has a water park for children and the kids at heart.

Hot Spring Leisure City

Where: Zhenggezhuang Village, Qijia Town, Changping District

Admission: 198 yuan for the hot spring and water park

Open: Hot spring 9 am – 2 pm, water park 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8178 8888

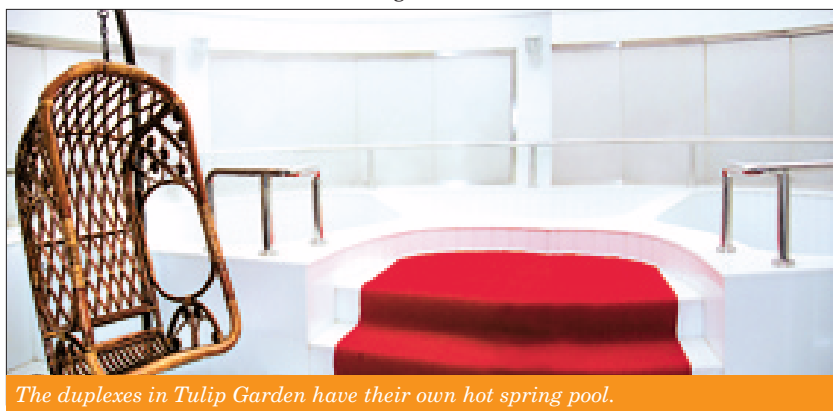


Club China Chic is compact but meticulously designed.



An outdoor pool surrounded by rocks, waterfalls and mini pavilions

Photos provided by Club China Chic



The duplexes in Tulip Garden have their own hot spring pool.

Tips for hot spring visits

1. It is not advisable to go for a soak when you are hungry, tired, drunk or too full.
2. Those who are weak should choose tepid water. The average duration of a soak in any temperature is 20 minutes and should not exceed half an hour.
3. Since hot spring water may contain minerals that can harm the skin after prolonged exposure, take a good shower after each session.
4. Even if you feel warm when you get out of the water, cover your body with a towel to maintain your body temperature; otherwise you might catch a cold.
5. Women should use facial moisturizer and body lotion after a soak.

Dining



Christmas Eve grand celebration

Come for the most entertaining events of the year at the Grand Ballroom. Fabulous shows, a raffle and a mouth-watering buffet of Chinese and international favorites are complemented by free international wine, beer, freshly squeezed juice and soft drinks. The evening package is 2,688 yuan per head. A dinner buffet at the Grand Cafe costs 888 yuan per person and includes the same free beverages. Enjoy a five-course Mediterranean set dinner at Da Giorgio with one complementary glass of Moët & Chandon for 988 yuan net per person. The price includes one ticket for the Grand Raffle Draw at the Christmas Eve celebration event.

Where: Grand Hyatt, Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

When: December 24
Tel: 8518 1234 ext. 3738



MIXS

Celebrate the season at MIXS where a sumptuous meal to tantalize your taste buds will be prepared right before your eyes.

Where: MIXS, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District

When: December 24, 25, 31, 6-10 pm
Cost: 988 yuan net per person (seven-course Christmas set menu with wine and champagne); 688 yuan net per person (Christmas set menu only)
Tel: 5993 8888

Italian Christmas

Enjoy Christmas Italian-style at Provincia. Feast on chef Blain's fabulous Italian set menu and enjoy Mumm champagne, Italian wines, beer, juice and soft drinks for 488 yuan. Enjoy the smooth sounds of a live DJ and dance the night away. The fabulous food and entertainment, Christmas Choir, raffle prizes and fun games will be the start of your magnificent Christmas experience.

Where: Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 5811 8888

Daccapo

Soak up the ambience and enjoy a lavish five-course Italian dinner and optional wines for each course. Guests get one gift voucher for a business lunch, valid through March 2010.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

When: December 24, from 6 pm

Cost: 488 yuan per person

Tel: 8522 1999

Padi now an Asian Spice restaurant

Ayana Resort and Spa Bali has extensively renovated its Padi Restaurant and Ballroom. Padi, previously the resort's Thai restaurant, is back as an "Asian Spice" venue now also offering Indian and Indonesian cuisine. Its international buffet breakfast is a gour-

met dining experience with six food stations. The Ballroom's refurbishment includes the latest conference facilities, bringing it up-to-date with the needs of today's meeting planners.



Louisiana cooking

The heat is on at One East as old Louisiana flavor returns on the new menu. Stimulate your senses with the season's freshest ingredients. The simple but tasty seafood jambalaya is rich in Cajun flavor. Indulge in traditional foods from the American south with hearty soups and remarkable main dishes. Finish up with something sweet for an unforgettable dining experience.

Where: One East, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5865 5020

Hotel

Traders Hotel, Puteri Harbor, Iskandar, Malaysia

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has signed an agreement with Themed Attractions and Resorts Sdn Bhd (TAR) to open and operate Traders Hotel, Puteri Harbour, Iskandar, Malaysia. The large guest rooms come in a variety of themes. Food and beverage outlets include an all-day dining restaurant, a lobby lounge, a sky lounge and a bar. The spacious ballroom and a range of function rooms can accommodate small to large events like meetings, conventions and exhibitions. Recreational facilities include a rooftop swimming pool, a health club and a rooftop garden.

Celebrate at the house

Book a weekend getaway at the House and enjoy a chilled bottle of champagne on arrival, a limited edition Opposite House CD and a round trip Maserati transfer. Offer includes an a la carte breakfast for two, complimentary minibar and access to Wi-Fi, a gym and a pool plus a cultural walk through Old Beijing on Saturdays, and flexible check-in and check-out times.

Where: The Opposite House, The Village, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, 2010

Cost: From 2,288 yuan for a Studio 70

Tel: 6417 6688

Winter interlude and rejuvenation

Plan a relaxing break at the Grand Millennium Beijing. The package includes complimentary Internet access but cannot be used with other hotel promotions and contract rates.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, Fortune Plaza, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 18 - January 4, 2010

Cost: 600 yuan superior room only, 688 yuan with daily breakfast for one, 768 yuan with daily breakfast for two; all subject to 15 percent surcharge

Tel: 6530 9383

Event

Christmas tree lighting

At 7 pm on December 1, 13 blind orphans lit Sofitel Wanda Beijing's 5-meter Christmas tree. The hotel is proud to support Bethel training center for the blind this year. After a wonderful children's choir, assisted by Sofitel volunteers, 37 stars were placed on the Christmas tree by the children. Each star represents one of the students at Bethel. Throughout 2010, Sofitel Wanda Beijing will be celebrating Chinese New Year, Easter, Mid Autumn Festival and next Christmas with the kids from Bethel.

Aviation

Choose comfort in KLM's Economy Class

Starting December, Economy Class passengers on KLM Royal Dutch Airlines' intercontinental flights can choose more comfortable seats. The new Economy Comfort zone offers an extra 10 centimeters of legroom and seatbacks that recline twice as far.

Depending on the distances, the new zone will be priced €80 (799 yuan) to €150 per leg of the journey. Flying Blue Platinum members and passengers on a full-flex Economy Class ticket can book Economy Comfort seats without a surcharge. Flying Blue Gold members are eligible for a 50 percent discount and Flying Blue Silver members a 25 percent discount.

Garuda Indonesia opens service to Europe

From next June, Garuda Indonesia is reopening its Jakarta-Amsterdam service. The route will be served by an A330-200 with a layover in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The aircraft sits 222, with 36 passengers in Business Class. It is capable of flying 12,500 kilometers and includes 180-degree reclining seats.



Singapore Airlines official airline of 2010 Youth Olympics

Singapore Airlines is the official airline of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games (YOG) to be held in Singapore next August. The Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (SYOGOC) and Singapore Airlines announced a sponsorship agreement under which the airline will provide tickets, freight carriage and publicity for the Games through its proprietary media channels.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Do you want a straw or a pipe?

By Han Manman

The first few months of study in an English-speaking country is never easy for Chinese students. They need to adapt to an alien culture and environment, and suddenly, to speak English everywhere, every day.

My friend Jenny knows this situation very well. After three years of school in the US, she speaks English fluently, but when she first arrived in the country, her English "sucked."

Jenny said her first six months overseas was one embarrassing situation after another because of her English. "My first dinner in the US was at McDonald's – the only place I was familiar with and where I thought I could survive ordering."

"When the clerk asked me, 'What can I get you?' I was so nervous I decided to order a combo, which seemed easier to order than food and drinks off the menu," she said.

Since she didn't know how to say "combo," she thought of the next best word. "Group one, please," she told the cashier, pointing at the picture of set meal No. 1 on the wall. Luckily, the cashier understood.

Feeling victorious, Jenny carried her food to a nearby table, then realized she forgot to get a straw for her drink. She looked around but could not find the straw container, so she approached an attendant.

"Do you have pipes?" she told the young man busily scrubbing a tabletop.

"Huh? Excuse me?" he said, taken aback.

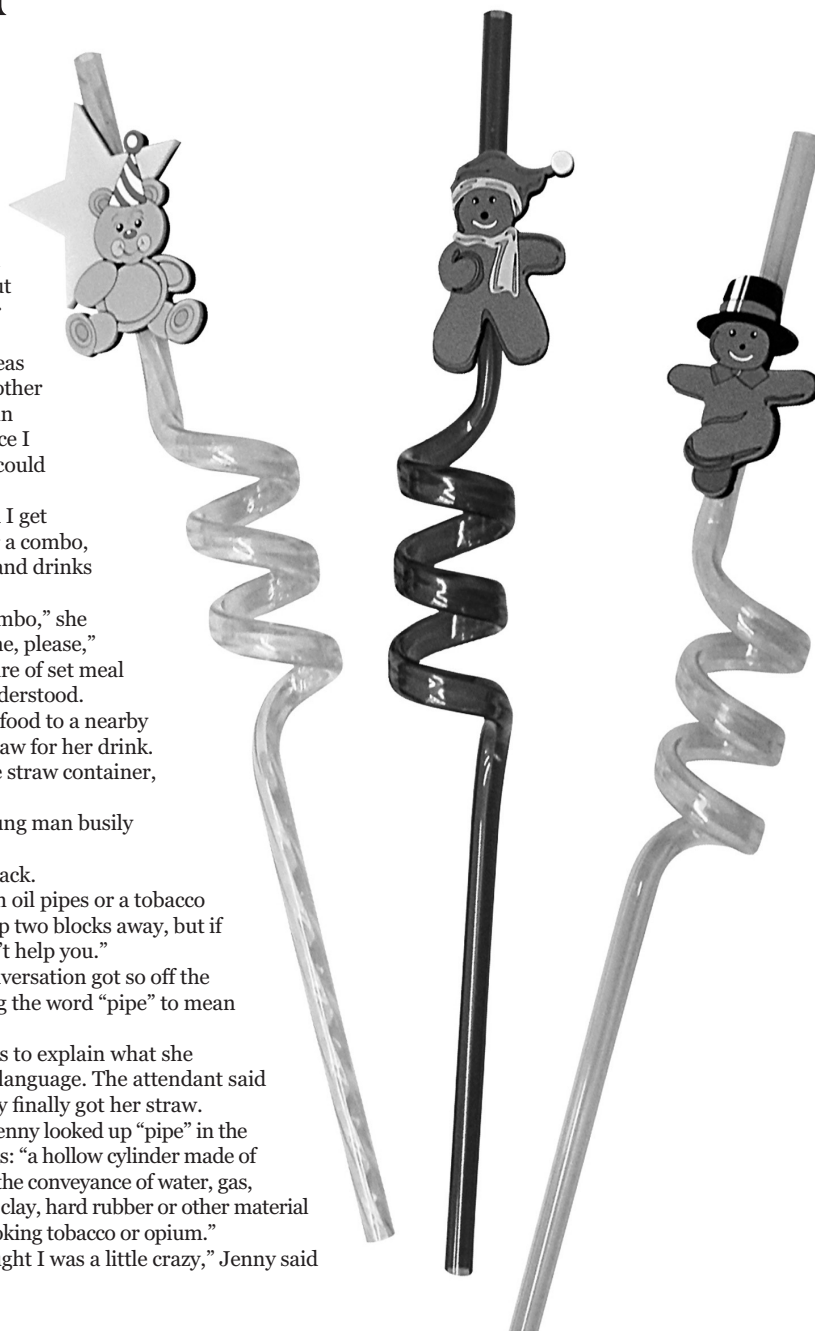
After a second, he said: "Do you mean oil pipes or a tobacco pipe? You can get a tobacco pipe at a shop two blocks away, but if you mean an oil pipe, I'm sorry but I can't help you."

Jenny didn't understand how the conversation got so off the subject. She clearly remembered learning the word "pipe" to mean "straw" in middle school.

Since she didn't have any more words to explain what she needed, she tried her best weapon: sign language. The attendant said "aah" and grinned. A minute later, Jenny finally got her straw.

As soon as she got back to the dorm, Jenny looked up "pipe" in the dictionary. She learned it meant two things: "a hollow cylinder made of metal, wood or another material used for the conveyance of water, gas, steam or petroleum" and "a tube of wood, clay, hard rubber or other material with a small bowl at one end, used for smoking tobacco or opium."

"It was no wonder the attendant thought I was a little crazy," Jenny said with a sigh.



Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

His wife juice

By Tiffany Tan

What this revolving restaurant is serving looks like it belongs on a cocktails list beside sex on the beach, fuzzy navel and screaming orgasm. How do you delicately explain to the proprietors that the sign refers to a bodily fluid not commonly discussed in polite company, much less in a business hotel's main restaurant!

Before we get bent out of shape, it actually only means to say "tartar sauce."

The Chinese equivalent, *taitai zhi*, evolved by taking a homonym of "tartar" – *taitai* – to pair with sauce (*zhi*). Champagne gained its Chinese equivalent the same way; it is *xiangbin jiu*. So did curry: *gali*.

Our sign got into trouble because *taitai* also means "wife," "Mrs.," "madam" or "married woman." The rest, as they say, is history. I tried to locate the hotel, but could not find it. It probably got closed down by censorship officials.



Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. He hooked 14 tuna.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): One of my young friends recently asked me a question: Why is it "14 tuna," instead of "14 tunas"? This is really very interesting. As we know, fish may be a collective noun. When it is plural, it means a number of fish species. I have a classic example for you: The angler turned over a fish to commercial fishermen when it was too big for him to manage. For the plural form, it is: He ate two fish. You will not say: He ate two fishes. When it comes to tuna or any other concrete fish species, we usually say: He hooked 14 tuna, with "tuna" as a collective noun. However, it is not wrong when you say: He hooked 14 tunas.

Native speaker Steven Sander (SS): Consult a dictionary when in doubt about pluralization. The plural of tuna is tuna. The plural of angler is anglers. The plural of grouper is groupers.

2. The country plans to loose its media on the market.

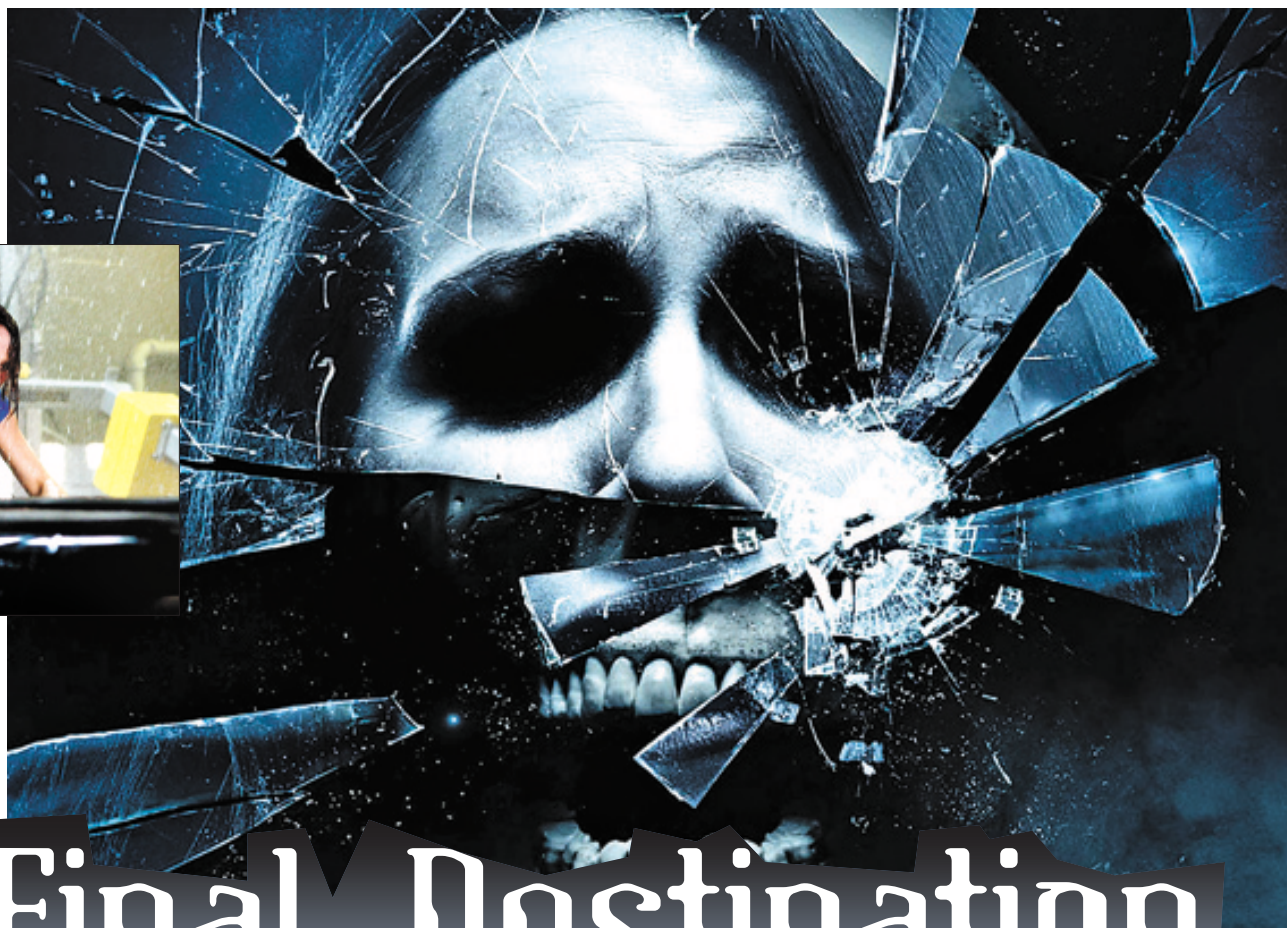
ZS: Once a friend of mine said that the verb "to loose" is wrongly used and that it should be "to loosen." I went to check the Webster dictionary and told him that it is not wrong. "To loose" may be used as a transitive verb too, meaning "let go," "set free." For instance, He loosed my arm from his grip. However, when you wish to use the verb "to loosen" which means "to make loose," you will have to say: He loosened his grip on my arm. So, for this sentence, when you wish to use the verb "to loosen," it will be: The country plans to loosen its control on the media and let it go free on the market.

SS: This sentence is a little confusing because of the preposition "on." A police officer can loose his attack dogs on a criminal. In that construction, it makes it sound like the government is setting its media free to attack the market. Perhaps the preposition "to" would work better. This makes it sound like the media is being set free to become subject to the whims of the open market – one of the most terrifying prospects for any state media group.

3. No profession ever exists until someone devotes themselves to creating it.

ZS: What is wrong with this sentence? Everything seems all right and idiomatic. The problem lies in the tricky inconsistency of personal pronouns. The beginners may not easily discern it. When you say "someone," it means a singular person. How can you use the plural reflexive pronoun? It is inconsistent. So, the right way to say it is: No profession ever exists until someone devotes himself to creating it. Here the feminists may protest. "Someone" may be male or female. Then, you will have to say: No profession ever exists until someone devotes himself or herself to creating it. It seems redundant. Simply, No profession ever exists until people devote themselves to creating it. Thus you have cleverly avoided the gender problem.

SS: Someone is one person. "One" is right inside the word. It would be more correct grammatically to say, "No profession ever exists until someone devotes himself to creating it." However, in common North American speech there is a tendency to substitute plural pronouns to indicate ambiguity: note the almost ubiquitous use of "they" rather than "he" or "he or she" when referring to a single ambiguous person. Despite the common usage, it remains unacceptable in written English.



The Final Destination

(2009)

Movie of the week

Fans of the franchise know the drill and which cliché moments to expect when.

The movie starts off good. The premonition sequence works fantastically in 3D, even though it pales when compared to the car pileup in *The Final Destination 2*. The opening credits flip through the previous films' more memorable death scenes. But after that, it is back to business as usual.

The Final Destination has some of the most ironic and funniest death scenes in the whole series. But one paradoxical thing is that the death scenes here are more about quantity than quality, which is quite unfortunate since the death scenes are the only reason why anyone goes to see a *Final Destination* movie.

Still, these deaths work really well in 3D.

Synopsis

On what should have been a fun-filled day at the races, Nick O'Bannon has a horrific premonition in which a bizarre sequence of events causes multiple race cars to crash, killing him and his friends. When he comes out of this grisly nightmare, Nick panics, persuading his friends and others to leave, escaping seconds before Nick's frightening vision becomes a terrible reality. Thinking they've cheated death, the group has a new lease on life, but unfortunately, it is only the beginning. As his premonitions continue and the crash survivors begin to die one by one Nick must figure out how to cheat death once and for all before he, too, reaches his final destination.

Scene 1: The race stadium

Hunt (H): Move, move, move.

Lori (L): Tell me again why we chose this over seeing the movie.

H: If these guys *lose focus* (1) for even a millisecond, you have to scrape them off the fence with a shove.

L: You come hoping to see a crash?

H: No, I would like to see them compete ... Of course it's to see a crash

L: You're sick, Hunt

H: Come on! Look, here comes Nick with our stuff.

L: Hi, babe.

H: Uh, time to lay off the Funyuns, Nicky boy.

Nick (N): Oh, thanks, buddy

Audience (A): Go, go, go. Whoa. Easy, fellas.

(Craig Perry shuts the door as Mark Helfrich tries to overtake him.)

Janet (J): Excuse me. Pardon me

A: That was a *close call* (2).

J: Well, great. What did I just miss?

A: Can you see, ma'am?

J: I'm sorry, not really

A: Would you like me to move down a bit?

J: Would you mind?

A: Be glad to.

J: Thanks, man. And I thought chivalry was dead.

L: Heh. That's not true. I have my cowboy right here.

(L and N kiss.)

J: Get a room (3), guys.



Scene 2: A coffee stand

Lori (L): Nick, was it like a dream or like a voice in your head?

Nick (N): I just, I just saw it.

Hunt (H): Can we just try to forget about it?

Janet (J): Are you kidding? I am never gonna get that image out of my head. I mean, that girl's face just ...

L: Janet. Look, I know it's difficult.

J: We're all a little *freaked out* (4), OK? But why are we still alive?

H: Who cares why? OK? If we made it, we deserved it.

J: Hunt, will you give the lucky-coin shit a rest, please?

N: Guys, look.

(The TV reports the crash news.)

N: I think we should go to the memorial.

J: I can't. I can't go back.

H: Yeah, screw that.

N: We can pay our respects to those people.

H: What people? People who didn't have a Dr. Xavier with them to tell them to get out of the way? People who didn't have one of these? Go ahead, Janet. Kiss it. It's your choice, heads or tails, but you know I like head.

J: Can't believe I ever went out with you.

H: Can't believe you were so lucky.

N: Guys, look. We're here. All right? Something gave us a second chance, so let's be thankful and just try to make the most of it.

Scene 3: Nick and Lori's house

Lori (L): Some say the chain can be broken. Like if you were to intervene into someone else's death, that would end it. But others say unless the chain is broken completely, then you're just changing the batting order, and sooner or later, you're up.

Hunt (H): That is some *spooky* (5) psychobabble shit

Janet (J): Shut up, please. This is not funny.

H: He [Nick] could be watching a ton of TV.

J: You know what this stuff does to me. It's okay. All we're trying to do is figure out what's going on.

J: You are gonna have to figure that out without me. You can call me later, but

I gotta go. Hope you have fun.

L: Janet, come back. Don't leave.

J: No, Lori. You guys are freaking me out.

Nick (N): What's with that?

L: She went from uptight but normal ...

H: Too uptight and totally insane

L: Why do you gotta be a *prick* (6)? She saw somebody die.

H: So did we. We're all freaked out.

L: Would it kill you to be sensitive?

H: I don't know. I've never tried it.

N: Where are you going?

H: If you're right about this whole crash thing, then I'm going to make the most of every moment I have left. So I'm gonna do what I do best: I'm gonna go *get laid* (7). If I'm dying, I'm trying. Keep up the good fight, guys. And if I happen to bump into Janet, I will check on her.

Vocabulary

- lose focus:** to get distracted
- close call:** a narrow escape from danger or trouble
- get a room:** here Janet is complaining about Nick and Lori's intimacy in public
- freak out:** to lose emotional control
- spooky:** ghostly or eerie
- prick:** here it means a highly unpleasant person
- get laid:** to have sex

(By Huang Daoheng)